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sexual outsider
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The hustler's life:
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Sight and Sound



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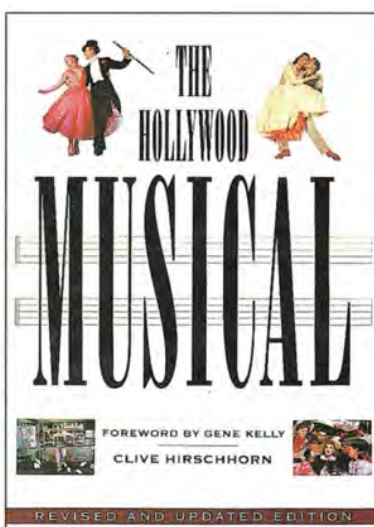
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Beyond the fringe

Contributors to this issue

Carole Angier's award-winning biography of Jean Rhys will be published in paperback in May

Peter Biskind is author of several books on cinema

Leslie Dick's new novel *Kicking* will be published in May

Raymond Durnat's numerous books include volumes on British cinema and Renoir

J. Hoberman has recently published *Vulgar Modernism* and a volume on Yiddish cinema

Andy Medhurst teaches at the University of Sussex and has written widely on British cinema

Suzanne Moore

is a columnist for *The Independent*

Michael O'Pray has a book forthcoming on Adrian Stokes

John Russell Taylor is a critic for *The Times* and has written widely on art and film

James Saynor is a freelance film and television critic

Amy Taubin writes on film and television for several publications

Michael Wood is Professor of English at the University of Exeter and is writing a book on Buñuel

Elizabeth Wilson's books include *Halfway to Paradise*, on women in post-war Britain

What do the following have in common – other than that they are all featured in this issue? An exiled Spanish surrealist film-maker, Luis Buñuel, who died in 1983. Gus Van Sant, an art school film-maker whose recent films feature teen stars such as Matt Dillon and Keanu Reeves. Tilda Swinton, a British actress known for her work with experimental film-makers and for her theatrical performances at the Royal Court and Traverse. And the late Jack Smith, a US film-maker/theatre man whose *Flaming Creatures* will be shown at the ICA in February.

Revealing art

The answer would seem to be that they all are, or have been, members of that most prized of modern clubs, the avant-garde. Yet if that is the case, what exactly is the club of which they are members?

The idea of an avant-garde predates cinema, of course – and was forged as a term in the mid-nineteenth century to describe, in the words of a French utopian thinker, artists “who know where Humanity is going, know what the destiny of the human race is”, and an art which is the “forerunner and revealer”. The intimate relationship between an art radical in formal terms and one radical in political terms has remained at the heart of our idea of the avant-garde. As have two other beliefs: that innovation and novelty are themselves things to be valued; and that the avant-garde is a revolutionary elite leading us in the direction we shall eventually recognise we must go.

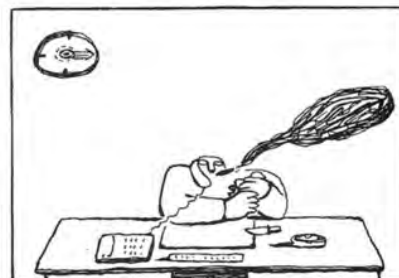
It would take a book rather than an editorial to argue why the idea of an avant-garde, in the sense crudely described above, seems something historically complete – and finished. Evidence would have to include the recent recognition that there is no necessary relationship between aesthetic and political radicalism; the acknowledgment that the avant-garde's cry, ‘Make it new’ has been best understood by a consumer culture committed to novelty after its own fashion; the way the avant-garde has become the officially sponsored art of the post-war years. And, perhaps above all, a rejection of the idea of a transnational elite spreading a common aesthetic across heterogeneous places and peoples.

New identities

When new identities are struggling to assert themselves against old dominant definitions – and not only in Europe – it may be possible to think again about the history of the avant-garde. It may be more fruitful to think of Buñuel as part of a Catalan modernism than of some transnational movement belonging simultaneously nowhere and everywhere. And it may be equally revealing to see today's “avant-garde” film-makers as belonging to more local traditions than would have until recently been acknowledged. If so, there is a chance for a range of kinds of film-making that are more various and more local than before – and at least as formally adventurous as any that we have known.

JERRY ON LINE #1

James Sillavan – Peter Lydon ©



'Jerry, with Christmas upon us I can't sack staff who've given us so many years... and to put five movies into turnaround right now, movies we've nurtured and cared about, it breaks my heart... let's leave it to Jan 5 Jerry. I'll be in Palm Springs 'till the 10th if you need me.'

Everything overexposed

J. Hoberman

Reviled, banned, rioted over, Jack Smith's 1963 *Flaming Creatures* is the only American avant-garde film whose reception equalled that of *L'Age d'or* or *Zéro de conduite*. It seems unfair that so light and playful a movie should bear so heavy a burden of notoriety – certainly Smith himself felt burned. A dozen years before he died of Aids, he withdrew *Flaming Creatures* from circulation, bitterly complaining that his film, "designed as a comedy", had been transformed into "a sex issue of the Cock-tail World".

Smith never completed another film – although his screened rushes, slide shows, and theatre pieces exerted a profound influence on everything from the Warhol factory and the Playhouse of the Ridiculous, through the productions of Richard Foreman and Robert Wilson, to the punk movies of the late 70s and the performance artists of the late 80s.

The commotion that surrounded *Flaming Creatures*, together with its subsequent disappearance, has obscured its artistry. Yet the tumult that it occasioned is as illuminating in its way as the movie itself. Now back in release after a screening at the New York Film Festival, *Flaming Creatures* is a discontinuous series of 'exotic' tableaux accompanied by a rich mix of movie dialogue and (mainly) ancient pop music. It could be described as a cross between Josef von Sternberg at his most studiously artistic and a delirious home movie of a transvestite orgy – except that 'transvestite' is not precisely the word for Smith's gang of odalisques, Spanish dancers and bewigged vampires (half naked, many of them women). Nor would Sternberg have had the aesthetic daring to use outdated film stock of dubious provenance to give his black and white images the flickering ethereality of a world half consumed in the heat of its desire.

As much as it is anything, *Flaming Creatures* is a meditation on the magic of a movie set. It begins staidly with members of the cast pattering back and forth in front of the all-but-undecipherable posters which serve as credits. A tableau of a man in a white dress languidly flirting with a woman in a black nightgown is followed by overhead shots of creatures applying lipstick. After a brief tangle of bodies, a transvestite seizes his female rival and, with the furtive participation of other creatures, proceeds to ravish her. This mock orgy precipitates an earthquake and then a finale in which the creatures rise from the dead to dance.

Shot without a light metre on the roof of a Lower East Side movie house, *Flaming Creatures* had its premiere at midnight, 29 April 1963 at the Bleecker Street Cinema on a bill that also included Ken Jacobs' portrait of Smith, *Blonde Cobra*. The cinema management immediately terminated the

'underground midnights' that critic-film-maker-impresario Jonas Mekas had organised at the Bleecker; the first reviews of the film appeared that autumn. Arthur Knight, *Playboy's* expert on "sex and the cinema", caught *Flaming Creatures* in LA and was suitably appalled: "A faggoty stagreel, it comes as close to hardcore pornography as anything ever presented in a theatre... Everything is shown in sickening detail, defiling both sex and cinema".

Everything? *Flaming Creature's* initial viewers, as film-maker Gregory Markopoulos suggested, "were projected into a state of cosmic or filmic shock. Those images, scenes, and sequences that they had envisioned and had wished would appear in the commercial film that they attended were unexpectedly offered before their eyes... The audience burst forth and roared, while the walls of censorship began to crack". Or did they? After the Belgian government refused to allow Smith's movie to be shown at the experimental film festival in Knokke-le-Zoute, *Flaming Creatures* made *Variety's* front page – not for the last time. But New York itself was cleaning up for the 1964 World's Fair. Off-Off Broadway theatres were shuttered; Times Square dance halls closed; Lenny Bruce was busted for obscenity; uncensored screenings of underground movies were hounded from venue to venue.

It was at the New Bowery Theater on Monday, 3 March 1964 that two detectives broke up a showing of *Flaming Creatures* – "hot enough to burn up the screen", one would tell the press – impounding the film and projector, and arresting Mekas, Jacobs and two others. Abetted by a handful of academics, some beatnik poets and a prominent civil rights lawyer (who thought he was representing a film called *Crimson Creatures*), Mekas devoted his energies to the forthcoming trial. The three-judge Criminal Court panel which included a former New York mayor, refused to allow expert testimony on the film's artistic merit or alleged pornography; the prosecution case rested on treating the judges to a screening. Mekas and Jacobs were convicted and sentenced to sixty days in the New York City workhouse.

The sentences were suspended, but the ruling has never been reversed. As Jacobs v. N.Y. worked its way through the courts, *Flaming Creatures* rocked the film societies of the nation's universities. There were arrests and confiscations at the University of New Mexico, the University of Texas and the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. At Notre Dame, a disrupted screening ended with students maced by police – by that time, however, *Flaming Creatures* was an organising tool for the right as well as for the left.

Although the Supreme Court refused to accept Jacobs v. N.Y., Associate Justice Abe Fortas opined that he would have reversed the decision. This footnote be-

'That movie was so sick, I couldn't even get aroused', said one anonymous senator



came a football when, in the summer of 1968, lame duck Lyndon Johnson nominated Fortas for Chief Justice. The print of *Flaming Creatures* confiscated in Ann Arbor was flown to Washington, where senator Strom Thurmond organised a Fortas Film Festival in Room 2228 of the Senate office building, projecting a fourteen minute filmed striptease, two other skin flicks and *Flaming Creatures* on the wood-panelled wall. Members of Congress were invited, as was the press, and anti-Fortas forces announced plans to send prints to women's groups and civic clubs in hopes of triggering further outrage.

Before the Fortas nomination collapsed, there was talk of showing the films on the Senate floor. Although this last screening never came to pass, *Flaming Creatures* is probably the only American avant-garde movie ever described in the *Congressional Record*.

While *Flaming Creatures* was by no means the only sexually explicit movie produced by the early 60s underground, it triggered a rage that far exceeded the hostility directed at such other candidates for martyrdom as Stan Brakhage's *Window Water Baby Moving* or Barbara Rubin's *Christmas on Earth*. These movies were 'merely' explicit – or, in the case of Jean Genet's venerable *Un Chant d'amour* and Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising* (both also prosecuted, albeit less forcefully), blatantly homoerotic. But the activities in *Flaming Creatures* are also something else.

At once splendidly visionary and startlingly anti-illusionist, *Flaming Creatures* offered a liberation from 'good' technique as well as from 'proper' behaviour. Everything in it is overexposed. Its aesthetic revelation is founded on the revelation of artifice: the discrepancy between sound and image, the transvestites who flaunt their cocks, the camera that seems to participate in the orgy.

Most suggestive was the account of *Flaming Creatures* an anonymous senator offered *Newsweek's* correspondent: "That movie was so sick, I couldn't even get aroused". Although the initial shock of *Flaming Creatures* can never be recaptured, the senator's response suggests that the movie's failure as pornography was something worse than pornography itself.

As funny as it is poignant, *Flaming Creatures* is guilty of a criminal disrespect more serious than burning the flag. Senators search for authority in vain. There's a spatial ambiguity that goes beyond the visual – a serious lack of gravity, a disorienting absence of perspective. Those rudely brandished dicks, neither erect nor flaccid, are only penises. In so casually representing the male organ, the film desecrates the underlying symbol of all power structures. *Flaming Creatures* is a movie with no master in the harem.

● J. Hoberman will introduce *Flaming Creatures* at the ICA, London on 4 February.

The windy city

John Russell Taylor

This was Chicago's twenty-seventh International Film Festival, which makes it the longest-lived competitive event in North America. By now it should have become a well-established local institution – supported, respected and taken for granted. But, for better or worse, not a bit of it. Chicago, ever conscious of its 'second city' status, is in certain respects like a very large small town. Everybody knows everybody else's business, and petty rivalries are rife around the parish pump. Thus the more successful the festival is, the more other institutions – film schools of local universities, film programmes of bodies like the Art Institute, even Chicago-based film critics – tend to resent it.

Also, since memories are long and rarely updated, the festival's beginnings work against it. A recurring canard accuses it of not being serious, just a rich man's plaything. This is because when Michael Kutza launched it in 1964 as a modest three-day event, he was an eager young designer and film-maker in his early twenties, and such shoestring finances as it then required came mostly from the pockets of his parents (successful doctors both) and their friends. Kutza himself has never been remotely rich and the festival has been living hand-to-mouth ever since, but the aura remains.

Despite occasional financial support from the city in previous years, this time it had no local government money at all. Indeed, if local celebrity Oprah Winfrey (whose show is taped in Chicago) had not come forward to bail it out, it might never have happened. Which, ironically, would have been a great loss principally for Chicago and Chicagoans, for the festival brings to the Mid-West examples of world cinema that it would never otherwise see.

As far as the vital work of the festival is concerned, it is predictable only in its unpredictability. Though Kutza now has a board of trustees and all the paraphernalia of a large-scale event (two weeks in three theatres showing about 120 feature films), it is still primarily his personal taste which rules. That, and the need to cater for as many different audiences as possible. The opening film, for instance (this year, George Gallo's *29th Street*), is always as crowd-pleasing as can be managed without compromising festival standards, so that the local grandees who support the event because it is the thing to do, but tend to run a mile from anything with subtitles, can enjoy a good evening out. Chicago's close-knit ethnic groups are wooed with films in their own languages: Kutza has long been looking, for example, for presentable films in Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian to mobilise support among the well-established Baltic communities. Then there are the film students (who tend to remain snooty)



Eating people is wrong: 'Delicatessen', a science fiction comedy about cannibals and militant vegetarians

If local celebrity Oprah Winfrey (whose show is taped in Chicago) had not come forward to bail it out, this festival might never have happened

and the gays (who usually get their goodie late Saturday night).

This year's retrospective was a tribute to CinemaScope, which, with new prints of everything from *The Seven Year Itch* and *Forty Guns* to *The Hustler* and *The Fly*, was both popular and historically interesting. There were not so many takers for a special screening of the newly restored 1927 *Casanova*, with Mosjoukine as the great lover, but the kids were well pleased with the Piper-Heidsack award evening for John Cusack, who combines brat pack/teen heart-throb appeal with a career as avant-garde theatre director in Chicago. Even foot fetishists had their moments at the Shoes from the Stars exhibition, with 100 shoes from stage and screen, and sponsored by the Italian Trade Commission.

As for the meat of the festival: since the film selection is directed entirely at a Chicago audience, and the event is untrammelled by FIAPF regulations, it is free to

take its pick from the year's cinema without regard to whether a film has had a previous festival showing or not. This year's Golden Hugo winner, *Delicatessen*, a crazed science fiction comedy about future war between cannibals and militant vegetarians directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Marc Caro, was in fact a surprise success at Cannes, but for the average Chicagoan (who loved it), that may as well have happened on the dark side of the moon. Other prizewinners included Kieslowski's *The Double Life of Veronika*, the Mexican *Danzon*, directed by Maria Novaro, and Beban Kidron's *Antonio and Jane* from Britain. In fact, Britain came off well this year: among the other popular successes were *Life Is Sweet* by Mike Leigh, who has been a favourite in Chicago ever since *Bleak Moments* won the top prize in 1971, and *The Bridge*, an elegant piece about the early life of the painter Wilson Steer, and director Syd Macartney's first feature.

The main flurry had nothing at all to do with the films. Skrebneski, Chicago's most highly prized photographer, has for some years now designed a festival poster – for sale, not advertisement – and it is usually erotic, in a glamorous and inexplicit way. This year's struck me as less so than many, but the new puritanism raised its head and the *Tribune* refused to reproduce more than a discreet sliver of it. No doubt in some respects partial publicity is even better than the whole thing; at least it created a nine-day wonder. How silly, how irrelevant, and how very Chicago.



Discretion: Skrebneski's festival poster

Executive chairs

Peter Biskind

After weeks of embarrassing foreplay in the press, former Warner Brothers V.P. of worldwide production, Mark Canton, finally moved to Columbia in the first week of October, where he replaced chairman Frank Price. Canton got a five year contract, while Price went to indieprod heaven, returning to his Price Entertainment with a deal at Sony Pictures Entertainment estimated to be worth anywhere from \$10 million to \$20 million (including a payout of \$7 million in salary for the three years remaining on his contract).

Canton was not a high-profile executive in the industry, and little known outside it. He is the son of Arthur Canton, Alfred Hitchcock's publicist, and grew up in the lap of the business. As a child, he was on familiar terms with the likes of Sam Spiegel and Doris Day, who sent the Canton family fruitcake every Christmas. Canton was a protegee of Jon Peters before he went on to work for Warners and became, according to *Vanity Fair*, the self-proclaimed Friend of Comedy, associated with movies like *Peewee's Big Adventure*, *National Lampoon's Vacation*, and the *Police Academy* series, which were phenomenally successful for the studio. He was said to be Peter Guber and Peters' main ally at the studio on *Batman*, a role that forgives many sins. He also supervised *Bonfire of the Vanities*. Julie Salamon, in her account of the making of *Bonfire*, *The Devil's Candy*, quotes him as telling Brian De Palma's agent, Marty Bauer: "This is the best movie I've been involved with in the history of my administration".

Canton's motives in going to Columbia are obvious. Reportedly, he was restless at Warners after Bat-mates Guber and Peters left for Columbia, and was frozen out by his bosses, John Daly and Terry Semel, who were reluctant to share their power. Recalling his drama class in grade school, Canton has said: "I always played the best second role. I was always the prince. I was never the king, but I wanted to know what it was like".

Canton is forty-two and hip, as opposed to Price, twenty years older, who is reputed to be emotionally aloof, hands-on to a fault, and methodical. Price reportedly once had a deal at Columbia which gave him an automatic green light on six pictures under \$18 million, and in two years didn't make any. In his eighteen months at Columbia, he had one big hit (*Boyz n the Hood*) and one bomb (*Return to the Blue Lagoon*).

Canton's biggest asset is his close friendship with SPE chairman Guber. Says Canton: "My biggest strength, other than luck, is my relationships. Who do I go away with my family on weekends? Dick Donner, Joel Silver, Jon Peters. Whose house do I go to? David Geffen's or Peter Guber's... I am truly blessed. I have won-



Hit of the season: Christopher Lloyd with Thing in 'The Addams Family'

derful friends and a great job in a business that I love. And Mike Orvitz likes me. He really likes me".

Meanwhile, over at Paramount, another studio recovering from a year of turmoil, the production head job, reportedly offered to and turned down by Scott Rudin, has gone to John Goldwyn, grandson of Paramount co-founder. Goldwyn may have taken the job because he hoped to get stock in the cash-rich company, which is ripe for takeover.

Paramount has had a really nasty last two years, with several tentpoles collapsing and blockbusters flopping, including *Days of Thunder*, *Godfather III*, *Another 48 Hours*, *The Two Jakes* and *Flight of the Intruder*. There has also been the defection of Eddie Murphy; the highly public contretemps with its star producing team, Bruckheimer and Simpson, who eventually left for Disney; the humiliation of the long-running Art Buchwald suit; and write-downs last year of nearly \$200 million. Its market share has shrunk from 22 per cent to 15 per cent in five years, and during one period in 1990 and 1991, it lost money on twelve straight movies. To add insult to injury, the Zuckers, Jerry and David, directors of Paramount hits *Ghost* and *Naked Gun 2½*, defected to Columbia.

Whose fault? It depends on who's talking. Last spring, *Vanity Fair* weighed in, blaming Paramount's woes on CEO Martin Davis, who fired studio head Frank Mancuso. Mancuso had worked for the studio for thirty-odd years, and had been chairman since 1984. Under his regime, Paramount prospered, churning out hits like *Fatal Attraction* and *Top Gun*. What his years of service earned him, reportedly, was a three-hour lead time on the rest of the industry in hearing news that Davis had appointed Stanley Jaffe, one of his producers, to be his boss. Mancuso, needless to say, resigned, and sued Paramount for \$45 million for breach of contract.

Davis took over Paramount in 1984, after the sudden death of Gulf & Western founder, Charles Bluhdorn, and immediately presided over the resignation of the

legendary management team of Barry Diller, Michael Eisner, and Jeffrey Katzenberg, who, said the magazine, had transformed the studio. "When Barry brought Eisner in, it was electrifying", said a source. "Before that, the studio made \$10 or \$20 million a year, \$40 million if we were lucky. Diller and Eisner gave us seven or eight years of unqualified success, making more than \$100 million, year in and year out".

Then along came *Newsweek*, which took the opposite tack. According to writer Josh Hammer, Mancuso's leadership was "passive". He was aloof, and when he did relate to talent, it was only to feud and bicker. Moreover, *Newsweek* argued that it was Ned Tanen, his head of production, who deserves credit for the run of hits that buoyed the studio during the late 80s. Tanen was quoted as calling his former boss the "booker from Buffalo", although he has subsequently denied saying it. Said Art Linson, who produced the hugely successful *Untouchables* for Paramount, "For me, the rudder fell off the ship after Tanen left". In this view, Davis had to step in and stop the carnage.

After Davis replaced Mancuso with Jaffe, he hired NBC wunderkind Brandon Tartikoff to run the studio. Tartikoff cleaned house, letting executives David Kirkpatrick and Gary Lucchesi go, and produced a cheap holiday quickie, *All I Want for Christmas*, that seems to have bombed, and is seen by some to confirm suspicions that he is no more than a TV hack.

A lot of Hollywood talent applauded when *Christmas* got into difficulties, because cheap movies spell bad news for the industry salary structure, and Tartikoff had gone public in the *New York Times* with his cost-cutting tactics and downscale, youth-oriented, lowest common denominator strategy.

Nevertheless, its looks as though Tartikoff may be sitting astride the biggest hit of the season, *The Addams Family*, which grossed \$44 million in two weeks. He has also re-signed Eddie Murphy, presided over his first film in over a year, *Boomerang*, and launched the long-awaited sequel to *The Hunt for Red October*, the \$43 million *Patriot Games*, in which he both signalled that he wouldn't take any nonsense from stars by dumping Alec Baldwin, and snagged a big one, Harrison Ford.

Tartikoff says his critics are frightened that he may succeed. If *Christmas* works, studio "owners will say, 'Why are we spending \$90 million on Hook?' [Director] Rob Lieberman for *Christmas* cost one-tenth of what Mike Nichols cost on *Regarding Henry*, and I'll bet Mike Nichols couldn't have done a better job".

It's talk like this that makes Hollywood talent see red, but these days, when the red tide of losses shrinks profit margins and studios poormouth to drive costs down, there will be a lot more like it.

Director Rob Lieberman for 'Christmas' cost one-tenth of what Mike Nichols cost on 'Regarding Henry', and I'll bet Mike Nichols couldn't have done a better job

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Street life: River Phoenix as Mike, the narcoleptic boy whose lack of consciousness is what saves him

Mixing rich and poor boys, street hustlers and strange families, Hollywood psychodrama and avant-garde trance film, 'My Own Private Idaho' shakes up all the categories, argues Amy Taubin

Objects of desire

● At the opening of Gus Van Sant's *My Own Private Idaho*, we look down a very long stretch of two-lane highway, bisecting the desert scrubland, curving upwards as it disappears into the distant mountain haze. Like a shot, River Phoenix skids into view. His cheek, with its ragged blonde sideburns and faint tracing of acne, is disorientingly close. It's like waking up with a stranger's head shoved against your own. Phoenix coughs; you can feel his breath in your ear.

Phoenix plays Mike, a narcoleptic gay hustler whose parentage is as incestuous as that of Faye Dunaway's sister/daughter's in *Chinatown* (1974). But since Mike's origins are below the poverty line, this is no Greek tragedy, just an extra Oedipal wrinkle in an already disenfranchised existence.

Mike looks down the road and decides he's been here before. "I know this road. It's one kind of face. Like someone's face. Like a fucked-up face". Just in case the viewer is not yet in touch with Mike's way of seeing, Van Sant irises down around the relevant features: the eyes are two bushes; the smile, a depression in the black-top highway. Suddenly Mike falls down in the middle of the road in a narcoleptic stupor. He dreams a faded home movie of himself as a child, safe in the arms of his mother, a bottle blonde with a Mona Lisa mouth seated on the porch of a wood-frame house. Clouds rush across the sky, salmon leap slow motion upriver towards their spawning ground, and Mike wakes in a Seattle hotel room, being sucked off by a balding beer-bellied john. As in *Blow Job* (1964), Andy Warhol's notorious porn send-up, genitals are safely out of frame. Mike reaches orgasm and a wooden house comes crashing out of the sky, splintering on the highway.

My Own Private Idaho shifts fluidly between close-up and panorama, intimacy and distance, symbiosis and alienation. While there is something of Godard in Van Sant's depiction of sex as labour and/or theatrics, his films are associative rather than didactic, closer to Pasolini's in their blend of neo-realism and poetic lyricism. The influence of the European art cinema notwithstanding, Van Sant is a distinctly American film-maker with an extraordinary sense of place. Like the David Lynch of *Eraserhead* (1976) and *Blue Velvet* (1986), Van Sant uses elements of Hollywood psychodrama and American avant-garde trance film to explore the subjectivity of young men coming of age.

In the past six years, Van Sant has made three features: *Mala Noche* (1985), a \$25,000, black and white stunner about a gay skid-row store clerk's sexual obsession with a Mexican illegal migrant worker; *Drugstore Cowboy* (1989), a \$6 million Hollywood indie production starring Matt Dillon as the leader of a quartet of junkies who rob pharmacies to feed their habit; and *My Own Private Idaho*, starring teen idols River Phoenix and Keanu Reeves, about the unrequited love of a teenage gay hustler for the slumming preppie prince who briefly acts as his protector. Set in and around Portland, Oregon, where Van Sant spent his adolescence and where he lives today, all three films ►

◀ identify with the subcultures they depict, whether gay, junkie or both.

Profiles of Van Sant treat as axiomatic the facts that he was born into an affluent family and that he is openly gay. Van Sant is "openly gay", but he questions the usefulness of the term. "A person's sexuality is so much more than one word, 'gay'. No one refers to anyone as just 'hetero' because that doesn't say anything. Sexual identity is broader than a label".

The son of a corporate fashion executive, Van Sant grew up in the wealthy suburbs of New York City, moving to Portland when he was in high school. "I was a preppie wannabee but my parents wouldn't let me go away to school. They didn't want to miss me that much. I was all they had", he says jokingly, and then qualifies, "Well, I have a sister". Van Sant's first talkie, made in high school, is reported to be about a brother and sister who go on a trip; the sister is killed in a car accident.

Van Sant attended the Rhode Island School of Design from 1971 to 1975, along with David Byrne and the other members of Talking Heads. It was a few years after David Lynch had graduated from the Philadelphia College of Art. Like Lynch, Van Sant shifted his focus from painting to film part way through college. The explosion of the 60s underground film scene was over, but Warhol was still an influence.

"I'd seen *Trash* (1970) and I knew the Velvet Underground, but I really didn't know Warhol's aesthetic", Van Sant recalls. "In 1974, there was a party on St Valentine's Day. It was the first time Talking Heads played, but they called themselves the Artistics at the time. They did pop songs and then David Byrne would take over and he'd do his stuff. He did 'Psycho Killer' and there were no words, just psycho killer, psycho killer, over and over. They were also doing covers for Velvet Underground songs and I remember thinking, 'man, it's so clichéd, I mean we're obsessed by Warhol because he's a painter like we are'. I remember being too nervous to dance so I pretended I was watching the band, but it felt like there was nothing to watch so I was there for no reason. At RISD, everyone was into fame, that was a Warholian thing. Art was beside the point, but everyone was really a good artist".

"It felt like there was nothing to watch so I was there for no reason". Warhol himself could not have said it better. Like Warhol, Van Sant has the charismatically absent presence of the obsessive voyeur. He also shares the slightly hunched, arms wrapped, self-protective stance of the 'pale master' and a reputation for silence, notwithstanding a gift for the gab. "Everyone has a crush on Gus", commented a woman who briefly worked with him. (Warhol held a similar fascination for the regulars who hung out in his Factory.)

After the success of *Drugstore Cowboy*, Van Sant bought a large Tudoresque house in Portland Heights, the quietly moneyed section of the city where his family had lived. During the production of *My Own Private Idaho*, members of both the cast and crew, including River Phoenix and Keanu Reeves, moved in. So *Idaho's*



The film is a crazy quilt of family romances. Everybody is either looking for or escaping from their families

alternative family had an off-screen life as well.

Where Warhol, the son of working-class Polish immigrants, fixed his gaze on glamour, wealth and fame, the upper-middle-class Van Sant is fascinated by adolescent drifters, naive and vulnerable. And unlike Warhol, whose distance from his subjects was palpable in his work, Van Sant connects with his characters through a shared sense of alienation. He once described his method of working with actors as slipping inside them, like a hand in a glove. Such an empathetic collaboration would have been outside Warhol's psychological capacities.

After graduating from RISD, Van Sant spent a brief time in the film industry as an assistant to Ken Shapiro, director of *The Groove Tube* (1974). His first attempt at feature film-making, *Alice in Hollywood*, was never completed. He moved back to the East Coast and worked in an advertising agency. One of his short films, *The Discipline of D.E.*, adapted from a Burroughs' story, got some attention at the New York Film Festival in 1977. About seven years later he read *Mala Noche*, a novel by a gay Portland writer, Walt Curtis. He moved back to Portland, and using his own savings made it into a film.

Mala Noche is remarkable for its richly textured black and white imagery, the evocative-ness of its crudely recorded soundtrack, its matter-of-fact, explicit depiction of gay sex, the connections it makes between sexuality and power, and the absence of sentimentality in ►

Sons and lovers: Bob Pigeon and Mike, part of a family of prostitutes, left; Scott Favor, who takes on his father's mantle, bottom; Mike and Scott, brotherhood of a different kind, right



◀ the performance of its leading actor, Tim Streeter. Streeter lets us see how the character's racism – his contempt for the Mexican who is the object of his desire – feeds his obsession.

Mala Noche won the 1987 LA Film Critics award for best independent feature. By then, Van Sant had co-written the script for *Drugstore Cowboy*, based on an unpublished autobiographical novel by James Fogle, a convicted felon. The script caught the interest of Laurie Parker, a production executive at Avenue. *Drugstore Cowboy* was a critical success and made money at the box office. As a result, Van Sant was offered big-budget films to direct. Instead, with Parker producing, he opted to make *My Own Private Idaho*. He says he sent the script to Phoenix and Reeves, never dreaming that they'd accept. Given the performance Van Sant got from Matt Dillon in *Drugstore Cowboy*, how could they refuse?

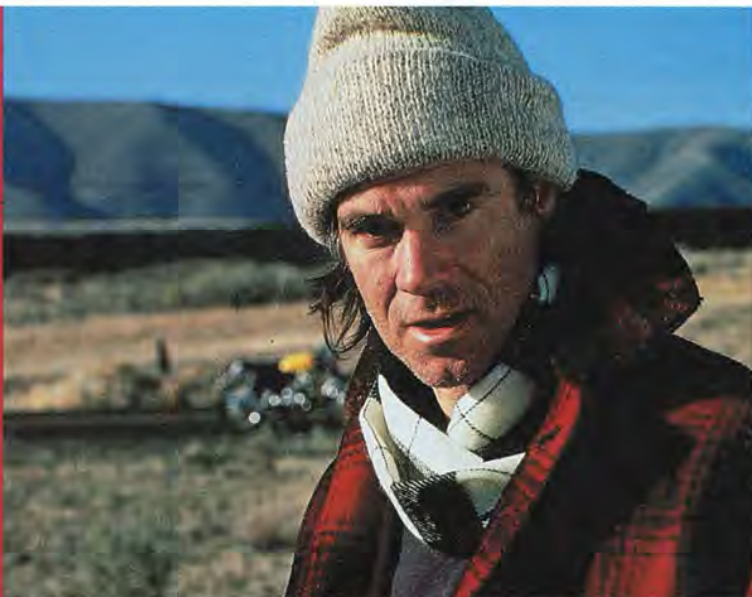
In more ways than one, *Drugstore Cowboy* is Van Sant's straightest film. The narrative is less associative, the visual style less improvisatory than in either *Mala Noche* or *Idaho*. The film's strengths lie in its detailed depiction of lower-middle-class suburbia and its non-judgmental and non-romanticised attitude towards drugs. With Nancy Reagan's hypocritical 'just say no' campaign in full swing, Dillon's speech about how heroin made it possible for him to tie his shoes every morning without going nuts was as subversive as it was honest.

Despite *Drugstore Cowboy*'s putatively heterosexual orientation (junk precluding much libidinal investment of any kind) and the conventional linearity of its narrative, its image of an alternative family unit prefigures *Idaho*'s band of outsiders. Bob (Dillon) and his long-term girlfriend (the dry-spoken Kelly Lynch) act as dad and mom to the novices, Rick and Nadine. In a twist that anticipates Mike's confused parentage in *Idaho*, mom beds down with her son when dad tries to go straight.

Drugstore Cowboy is about dropping out of middle-class tedium; the more surreal *Idaho* juxtaposes the societal extremes of haves and have nots. For the first time in his films, Van Sant uses a lead character, Scott Favor (Reeves), the son of a mayor, whose class origins correspond to his own. But unlike Van Sant, who chose to make *Idaho* rather than any of the big-budget films he was offered, and to make it on less than half the budget he had for *Drugstore Cowboy*, Scott betrays not only his friends, but also his own sexuality for money and power.

If Scott is both the villain and the object of desire of *My Own Private Idaho*, Mike is its governing consciousness. The irony here is that the narcoleptic Mike is literally the most unconscious character ever to hit the screen. In terms of Van Sant's beat romanticism, Mike's absence of consciousness is what saves his soul. It's also what makes *Idaho*, for all its black humour, rapturous beauty and cinematic invention, politically less tough than *Mala Noche*. On the other hand, the oneiric structure – the filtering of the narrative through Mike's snoozing subjectivity – gives coherence to the film's remarkable heterogeneity, its split-second shifts be-

Going places:
Gus Van Sant, born into the upper-middle class, identifies with adolescent drifters, naïve and vulnerable



tween the burlesque and the heartfelt, Rudy Vallee and the Pogues.

Mike and Scott are part of a gang of street prostitutes who hang out in a derelict hotel. Their leader is Bob Pigeon (William Richert), a fat, beer-guzzling chicken hawk who's got a thing for the narcissistic Scott. Bob and Scott act out their relationship as Shakespeare's Falstaff and Prince Hal, challenging each other to ever greater heights of bowlderised verse. Scott has also fallen into the habit of taking care of vulnerable Mike, whose narcolepsy endangers not only his income, but his life.

As a final fling, before cleaning up his act so he can inherit his father's political mantle, Scott goes on a trip with Mike, who's in search of his long-lost mother. Huddled beside a campfire in the desert, Mike risks, or perhaps courts, a repetition of his primal loss by confessing his love to Scott. "I just want to kiss you, man", he says softly, hugging his arms around his chest. Phoenix fills the moment with an absolute, naked need that blasts through easy tags of homo/hetero/bi. (That sexuality in Van Sant's films is too complex for labels doesn't make his work any less gay.)

It's a bit too much for the self-protective Scott. After a terrifying encounter with Mike's alcoholic brother/father (James Russo) and an acrobatic bedroom threesome with the ubiquitous Hans (Warhol superstar Udo Kier), whose impromptu cabaret performance rivals Dean Stockwell's in *Blue Velvet*, they wind up in Rome, where Scott, in a homophobic panic, falls in love with an Italian beauty. Her wordless adoration makes him feel that he's really a 'man'.

"I'm sorry we didn't find your mother, Mike", Scott mumbles guiltily as he presses money and a plane ticket into Mike's hand and rushes out of the door with his bride-to-be. It's a permanent parting of the ways. Back in Portland, Scott comes into his inheritance and Mike is out in the cold.

My Own Private Idaho ends with a double funeral. Scott's two fathers – Mayor Favor and Bob Pigeon – have both died and are being buried in the same graveyard. The schizoid structure is, for once, not a projection of Mike's frag-

mented psyche, but a mini-allegory of the polarisation of Reagan/Bush America. Eyes front, spines stiffened, the properly heterosexual Favor clan, now led by Scott and his wife, is desperately trying to ignore the carnivalesque spectacle taking place a few hundred metres away, where Mike and his fellow-outcasts are dancing on Bob Pigeon's grave. One close-up is enough to suggest that Mike's first eruption of anger is also his first taste of liberation.

Threaded with home movie images (no filmmaker has ever been better than Van Sant at forging and integrating these), *My Own Private Idaho* is a crazy quilt of family romances. Everybody is either looking for or escaping from their families, organising new families, or pouring over photographs of other people's families. Mike's sadistic brother/father has a mail-order portrait business in which people send him their family snapshots to be copied. "I like to have them around. They keep me company", he laughs, waving his bottle at the grotesque array. And in the campfire scene, Mike prefaces his lovelorn confession with the agonised question: "Do you think I'd be different if I'd had a normal Dad?" "What's a normal Dad?", shrugs Scott, the sophisticate.

Deeply regressive, Mike's desire for family is for the safety of the mother's body; his narcolepsy is his defence against the agony of his childhood abandonment. Anything that reminds him of his lost mother triggers a violent psychosomatic reaction. He shakes so much he looks as though he might explode, and then keels over in a stupor. Because he short-circuits before he can connect past and present, he remains as asocial as an infant, and in that sense, innocent. *Idaho*'s fragmented editing style – its heterogeneous visual associations and dense layering of spoken word, con-

Like Warhol, Van Sant has the characteristically absent presence of the obsessive voyeur and a reputation for silence

crete sound and music – evokes Mike's confusion of inside and outside, past and present.

And what cannot be said can sometimes be sung. Songs like 'Deep Night' and the Pogues' 'The Old Main Drag' can both punch up an irony and cut to the quick. This is certainly the effect of the lyric 'Locked in the arms of love', the last line of the 20s ballad 'Deep Night' and of Idaho's soundtrack, crooned by Rudy Vallee over the closing credits. Its irony at this point is compounded by the fact that Van Sant has used the song earlier – as an accompaniment to Mike's date with a kinky john who fetishises Little Dutch Boy household cleanser.

Even more interesting is Van Sant's use of instrumental arrangements of songs like 'Home on the Range' and 'America, the Beautiful' that are, at least in the US, part of a collective cultural consciousness. What happens here is that the viewer silently sings along with the film. And I suspect that Van Sant is counting on that process, both to trigger memory of the lyrics and of what the songs meant when we sang them as children and teenagers.

The best-known patriotic hymn, 'America, the Beautiful', is oddly elegaic, a quality emphasised in the film's hushed-pedal steel guitar arrangement. Van Sant uses the song twice. The first time – in conjunction with Scott telling Mike about his conflict with his father – it functions ironically to connect the betrayal of familial love with the betrayal of the American dream. The second time the song is heard is in the enigmatic coda that follows the funeral scene.

Mike is alone again, back on the road. "This road will never end, it probably goes all around the world", he says, and then promptly collapses in a stupor. A car pulls up. Two men get out. Mike does not even stir as they strip him of his shoes. The opening chords of the song are heard as the car roars away. The camera cranes up to an eye-of-god angle and we look down on Mike's fragile, sprawled-out body and, in the distance, "the 'spacious skies' and 'purple mountains' majesty" that the song refers to. The camera doesn't move. The song continues. A second car drives up, a man gets out, picks up Mike's sleeping body, puts it in the back seat, and drives on. Given the narrative of the film, we have reason to suspect that this is no rescue, but a prelude to some horror down the road. But what tips the tone of the scene – and the meaning of the film – towards some possibility of affirmation is the fact that as the man carries Mike to the car, the line we're singing in our heads is about crowning America's good "with brotherhood". At that moment one wants to believe in the possibility of brotherhood as one did when one was twelve – to say nothing of the particular charge the word has in a gay context.

Van Sant's *Private Idaho* is a place where one can hold fast to the desire for "brotherhood" and to be "locked in the arms of love". Betrayed countless times, the desire is never vanquished. For the surrealist beat, "A throw of the dice does not abolish chance" (Mallarmé).

● 'My Own Private Idaho' will be released in Spring

Gus Van Sant talks with Amy Taubin

Do you like 'My Own Private Idaho'? Do you go back to see your movies?

I love this movie. It's my favourite. I've seen it probably ten times and it's much better if you see it more than once. There are all sorts of things that become apparent on multiple viewings – I still see stuff that I didn't know was there: serendipitous things that are there for a purpose, that are put in, ultimately, by my subconscious. Because when we're making the film, we're not doing it intellectually, or at least, I'm not.

The other day I got a fax from Simon Turner, who does Derek Jarman's soundtracks. It was in a kind of child's handwriting – I guess that's how he writes. He had written "My" and then "OPI" and then the next sentence started with a "C", which is like "myopic". That's exactly how the character of Mike is seeing things – myopically, and I had never noticed. I had some rub-on letters from when I was a kid and I had made a cover for the script with different-sized letters. It came out "My Own Private IDaho". And I started thinking that the character's id was part of his insatiable need to be loved, the beast within him that he doesn't really know about, but that drives him.

A certain contingent of street hustlers I met, boys of his age, were looking for guidance and attention from men. Sex was something they did, but it was unimportant. What was really important was sometimes control and sometimes attention and focus from somebody who could be like their dad. That sort of thing, I guess, would come from the id.

I read in an interview with you that the campfire scene was rewritten by the actor, River Phoenix.

The character wasn't originally like that; originally, he was more asexual. I mean sex was something he traded in, so he had no real sexual identity. But because he's bored and they're in the desert, he makes a pass at his friend. And it just sort of goes by, but his friend also notices that he needs something, so he says we can be friends and he hugs him. But River makes it more like he's attracted to his friend... That he's really in love with him. Yes, that he's in love with him. He made the whole character

that way, whereas I wrote the character as more out of it, more myopic.

Now, it's all about unrequited love. It's about abandonment, yes. What about the Shakespeare? I have a feeling that people who can't deal with what the film's about go straight to the Shakespeare and say it doesn't work. What do you think it does to the film?

I had three different screenplays and segments of each were mixed and cut together. There was one whole screenplay that was just a modernised version of *Henry IV*. I thought it was interesting that Shakespeare was writing about similar characters to the ones I was writing about – I realised that while I was watching Orson Welles' *Chimes At Midnight*.

Then I also had a short story I had written about Ray, who played Pepper in *Mala Noche*, and his cousin, Little George, who was like Angelo in *Angelo My Love*. Little George was thirteen, but he acted thirty – like he tried to make passes at ladies who were forty. He had this mouth that was really funny and he never stopped talking or moving. Ray was a hustler but Little George was just on the street. The story was told through Little George's eyes; he had narcolepsy and a dog who helped him, so it was part a dog story, too, which was pretty funny. And they went to Mexico and Ray fell in love with a girl and had to ditch Little George. The film was also called *My Own Private Idaho* and the two lead parts were Chicanos.

And then there was a third script. It was called *In a Blue Funk* and it was about Mike and Scott, but with less of Scott – he was Mike's friend but he wasn't a rich kid and I don't think they went on a trip and there wasn't Shakespeare. And I think Mike had narcolepsy – that was the blue funk part.

So the three scripts were put together and I thought we'd cast street kids and see if they could connect with the Shakespearian words and make any sense of them. At the time, of course, I assumed my films were still going to be in the \$50,000 category. *You were writing all this before 'Drugstore Cowboy'?*

Yes. So the final version still had one foot in Shakespeare, but now I'm casting Keanu Reeves. I thought he'd be able to do it: for one thing in *Bill and Ted* they had their eloquent way of speaking – a false eloquence, their own valleyspeak. So I thought of it as characters who are speaking in

their own secret language when they're together – it's their way of having fun. I figured that when we got to the set, we'd find out if it was ridiculous or if it was working. So that's what we did, and I thought it was fine. I don't think it's pretentious but some critics react badly to it. *I think it's just post-modernist. I'm sure the critics who don't like it wouldn't mind having a David Salle painting in their living room.* Yes, it's a post-modernist move. It's like being in a plane where there are six different channels: it's all *Awakenings*, but you can switch to whatever language you want. So in the movie the characters are the same, but suddenly they're doing Shakespeare, as if they're travelling back to another time, yet where there were characters like them. Time is often used like that in the film – the lead character has lapses in time. And then when they travel to another country, to an ancient city (Rome), the boys hanging out on the piazza are also like them.

The PR people on 'Idaho' got upset when I referred to it as a gay film. Do you think it makes a gay statement?

I don't know what it means to make a gay statement, but I think it's a gay film.

It's not that it's not a gay film, but it doesn't play into any obvious gay politics. I've been noticing that when people write about me, they say I'm "openly gay". John Waters and I were talking about it and he said, "in a list of forty things that I am, gay is not the first thing". So if you got to choose your label, what kind of things would you choose?

Well, impressionistic, or post-modernist, which is a term that applies to what goes on today. I guess I'm a post-modernist, in the way that people like David Salle are. He talked in an interview about how when he was a kid he would watch the same movie over and over because on *Million Dollar Movie* on TV you could watch it four times a day. And that's just what I did, too. I'm not exactly aware of a post-modernist movement, but if I do things like David Salle or Michael Graves, it's a natural conclusion from having the same sources of, for example, education – a combination of things that led to your development as an artist. Like you watched Chiller Theater on Sandy Becker in 1961, but you also got immersed in *Naked Lunch* in 1968.

Do books such as 'The Men's Room' and 'Clarissa' make good television serials, asks James Saynor?

Not the classic serial

● The relationship between famous books and British television drama has been a stand-offish one of late. In Hollywood, there's a perennial, shameless confidence that high-profile literary products exist to be plundered by the big screen, for all the evidence that the transition to celluloid is rarely a cause for celebration. By contrast, the self-apologetic axiom among BBC producers at the moment is that 'lesser novels' make the best screen adaptations, rather than your *Bonfire of the Vanities* or *Billy Bathgate*. Partly this may just reflect a failure of nerve among BBC producers, or the fact that the rights to 'lesser novels' are cheaper to acquire. Thus, to take autumn 1990 as a survey period, the books adapted into BBC serials included *Blood Rights* by Mike Phillips; *House of Cards* by Michael Dobbs; and *The Green Man*, a forgotten Kingsley Amis yarn – none of them a wild succès d'estime or breakout bestseller.

From now on, there are signs that name recognition will be more of a factor in selecting texts for transmission, as works from Ben Elton's *Stark* to George Eliot's *Middlemarch* get wheeled before the BBC cameras. But in the autumn programming of 1991, producers were still rooting around in corners of Shepherds Bush lending library for source material that was hardly of the 'you've read the book – now watch the series' variety. Were they right to champion the lesser-known?

Man-woman stuff

"Now we've met, and fallen in love, and gone to bed", began Mark, "what happens next?"

"Let's think". Charity looked at him... "What happens in books?"

"I tell you what doesn't happen". He spoke authoritatively. "What doesn't happen is nothing".

Nothing, however, is largely what *does* happen in Ann Oakley's highly ironic novel, *The*

Men's Room (1988), from which the above piece of dialogue is taken. And, *pace* Mark, it's largely what happens in a number of other contemporary novels – that is, where 'nothing' is taken to mean the absence of Aristotelian story arcs; of fuel-injected plot motors; of a 'rising action' and a 'falling action'; of a beginning, a middle and an end.

The Men's Room, which traces the indolent pathways of sexual electricity between two members of the London Muscadet classes, certainly produces a good deal of rising and falling action, but not in the sense of a highly unified narrative. The book spans twenty episodic years, which see little of consequence happen (beyond the odd marriage break-up) and less resolved. The narrative is circular and undynamic – like most long-term relationships in the sluggish real world, in fact.

If much modern literature ignores Aristotle's view that plot is the soul of tragedy, screen fictions are still invariably sustained by the notion that you *do* need a good story, with an exposition, and a crisis, and a neatly trussed-up dénouement. That's why the more ruminative novels that smart people read are rarely transposed successfully to the screen. And it's why *The Men's Room* was a particularly bold – or foolhardy – choice as one of the BBC's flagship drama serials this past autumn.

Most critics dismissed the show as a torpid washout. Still, for those who slumped through all 250 minutes – and for those who thought *When Harry Met Sally* (1989) would have been a more truthful film if Meg Ryan and Billy Crystal had split up at the end – a salutary sense of pattern emerged. It was the timeless, oscillatory pattern of sexual bonding, as Mark and Charity fell repeatedly in and out of bed with one another, finally winding up in the 'out' position, though you felt that had the series lasted another few minutes, they might well have tangoed back to 'in'. The stasis of a pattern, though, is the last thing most viewers want from screen fictions. Nor do they look for character-led drama; character is usually value-added, not a substitute for plot. This is a shame, because in *The Men's Room* Harriet Walter and Bill Nighy gave memorable performances.

But Oakley's novel is about more than the short-circuited sequences of "man-woman stuff", as Martin Amis puts it. It is also an attempt to embroider fictionally the ideas of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* on to the divergent mind-sets of women and men. Mark believes in life's categorical narratives because he's driven by transcending 'masculine' logic and the need to imprint his, well, mark on the world. Charity, by contrast, knows that the rational progress of cause and effect is a patriarchal hoax. Part of Charity, though, wants to truckle to male fate mastering; a good deal of Mark yearns for the timeless immanence of a settled hearth and home.

Primarily, the novel is a sarcastic 'what do men want?' study, fascinated by the hormonally hamstrung Mark and his decisive-but-indecisive manoeuvres in the sack. Sexual explicitness is essential to Oakley's project, but such

illustration isn't possible on television, so a crucial part of the book's theoretical underpinning was lost. And because most of the rest of the novel's sexual-political thinking depends on authorial exegesis and characters' inner voices, producer David Snodin and adapter Laura Lamson clearly decided they had little choice but to take a rain check on Oakley's deeper structure. For the most part, the anaemic result was a textbook example of what happens to a novel-of-ideas when it's vaporised into an electron beam.

Screen thriller

The Men's Room is a 'lesser novel' because its surface texture lacks the sort of writerly fizz that book critics buy into, not because it lacks depth of thinking. But M. S. Power's trilogy of novels, *Children of the North*, seems alarmingly lesser on both literary counts.

What these thrillers – set in a death-spectred Belfast – are full of, though, is *incident*, which is what the screen needs like *Audrey II* in *Little Shop of Horrors* needs white and red corpuscles. The BBC's four-part *Children of the North* was a blood-thirsty creature, too, sketching the dirty war in Northern Ireland as a mutually sustaining interfusion of haemoglobin between the Provos and the forces of the Crown.

Power's books are skilfully plotted, but have a thin topsoil: where suffering and madness should take root there's an even-toned tumble of exposition and a somewhat anaesthetic sermonising. Television retained the elegiac feel, but used visuals and performances to reflect the interior landscapes of the characters as well – from Patrick Malahide's pukka British colonel to John Kavanagh's wily terrorist chief-tain, Reilly. Dramatist John Hale put new flesh on the bones of Power's scenario: this was no chapter-by-chapter transcription of dialogue, which is what *The Men's Room* frequently resembled. And where the books present a dogged naturalism, here was the elliptical, hermetic world of the 'liminal zone' screen thriller, with its self-generated rules of human exchange.

The motor of this micro-society was not economics or sex, but a symbiotic trade in intimidation across the security divide: sometimes the currency was intelligence, sometimes bodies. Social intercourse might consist of sex with a prostitute shared by both sides, or the curious process of male bonding between an RUC man and an IRA man duplicitously intertwined in the Andersonstown shuffle.

In contrast to the brambly utterances of the books, Hale's dialogue was tightly coiled and instinct with violence; it was skilled, too, at the laconic/sardonic byplay of men flexing their power, which was such a relishable feature of an earlier BBC paranoia epic, *Edge of Darkness* (1985). And David Drury's direction was as terse and tenebrous as the writing.

But because of its heavy stylisation and labyrinthine plotting, *Children of the North* had relatively little new wisdom to impart about the state of things in Ireland – other than that IRA honchos have souls, too. In general, with its fatalistic spiral of mutually assured

destruction, *Children of the North* was not 'realism' in the sense used by Raymond Williams to refer to a dramatic environment which implies the possibility for change, or as deployed by Ken Loach in his angrily interventionist Ulster exposé, *Hidden Agenda* (1990). At best, it was a Graham Greene-like, poetic-religious lament for the crushing of humanism; at worst, the sheer fantasy of the paranoia movie, with nihilism as a turn-on.

Soul death

An undertow of nihilism and amorality is the most fascinating aspect of W. Somerset Maugham's autobiographical spy stories about a First World War British agent called Ashenden (published in Maugham's *Collected Short Stories: Volume 3*). The tales have the air of elegant desiccation typical of English non-modernist writing of the 20s and 30s. But beneath the compliant surface you can trace much anti-patriotic disillusion and inner turmoil within the hero, John Ashenden – a bored boulevard playwright who volunteers to destroy people's lives on His Majesty's Secret Service.

Ashenden is a familiar spy-fiction smoothie: clever, cynical, complacent, charming and callous. He's too calculating and 'debonair' for us to be allowed to see his most private thoughts, so Maugham largely gives us an external, behavioural portrait of the man – his weariness at the *longueurs* and non-sequiturs of spying, his gelid air of indifference to mortality as he lures pitiful German agents to their doom. His perfunctory style – and Maugham's perfunctory sketching of him – seem a correlative of the moral banality of espionage, for all that the author drops in occasional pro-Allied rhetoric to steady the reading public of 1928. And the backdrop for many of Ashenden's machinations is a country that serves as a further emblem of slow soul death: Switzerland.

Dramatist David Pirie was an excellent choice by the makers of the BBC's four-part *Ashenden* to mould Maugham's stories for the screen: he is expert at dramas which unpick the patriotic and rake the ruthlessness of the Establishment mind. What wound up on television, though, was surprisingly less rich and subtle than Maugham's suave jottings.

Presumably constrained by the needs of big-budget costume drama, the series took a short cut on the characterisation of Ashenden himself – pitching him as far more warm-blooded and conflicted by conscience than his prose counterpart, and bolstering the agent's merciless mind moves with a certain amount of physical derring-do. He also seemed at least fifteen years younger than the hardened man-of-the-world of the book.

This might not have mattered if Alex Jennings had done something decisive with the title role. But with his boil-washed expression and middle-aged grooming, Jennings came over as far too much of a plank – more of a Harry Enfield man from the ministry than a sly cosmopolitan operator. He'd surely have stood out a mile as a plant on the spook-crazy social scene of Geneva. In the end, we couldn't



Sexual patterns: Harriet Walter and Bill Nighy, coming together before finally drifting apart



Under siege: Saskia Wickham as Clarissa finds herself repulsed by and drawn to powerful men

really sympathise, but nor was there enough unscrupulousness about him for us to savour. We were in identification limbo land.

Meanwhile, the ethical squalor was pitched against the pictorial lushness of small-screen period drama – and pictorial lushness won out, titivated by an over-jovial, pier-orchestra score. The filmic tracks, as marshalled by director Christopher Morahan, didn't really strike up a rapport with the authorial consciousness of Maugham: rather than impelled by a shrewd languor, they just seemed plain tired.

Loaded dice

In Maugham's Ashenden stories, certain moods and ideas outcrop in the work beyond what may have been the original intentions of the author. And in Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* (1747-48), the novelist is also on something of a mystery tour. This behemoth of an epistolary novel about a young woman hustled from pillar to post by sexual and economic menaces was intended to be a straight-as-a-die parable on the supremacy of feminine 'virtue' and spiritual rectitude. The dice, though, turned out to be loaded in ways Richardson couldn't completely control, and twentieth-century students have noticed all sorts of ironic psychological contradictions emerging within the breast of the self-righteously chaste Clarissa and her black-hearted wooer, Lovelace.

Clarissa claims to think sexual regard is contingent on the Other having a triple-A moral rating, whereas in reality, like Charity in *The Men's Room*, there's evidence that she's really controlled by deeper repulsion/attraction fantasies concerning the all-controlling male. Lovelace, like Oakley's Mark, wants to assert the rapist's abasing power over women – while intermittently yearning for submission within marriage to the elevated feminine ideal.

The conscious intent of Richardson's sce-

nario – a homily against any pre-marital sexual experimentation – won't wash with a present-day audience, so the television *Clarissa* has to hook us in the early stages by injecting a very un-Richardson-like air of facetiousness into the proceedings. Clarissa became something of a prude and Lovelace something of a winning rogue, as the serial increasingly mirrored a sex-siege comedy, like a peruked *Cheers* or *Moonlighting*. But then came Lovelace's savage and deranged rape of the heroine, and at this point the production was faced with a choice – either to retreat into the melodramatic sanctimony of Richardson's surface narrative, or to explore the more modern, subconscious text, whereby the violation and Clarissa's subsequent breakdown stand as a caricatured exemplar of all sexual initiation and its contingent trauma, as graphically chronicled by the likes of Simone de Beauvoir.

In general, the serial opted for the former – but hedged its bets in a coda of flashbacks, implying that the two antagonists were latent lovers united in death and thwarted in life only by Lovelace's socially inflamed testosterone levels, Clarissa's corseted puritanism, and her family's mercantile greed. It was an unsatisfactory, cautious historicism rather than a true universalisation of the sexual themes, but all things considered it was perhaps the best we could have hoped for.

There were strong performances in *Clarissa* – particularly from Sean Bean as Lovelace, a Mephistophelian dray horse – but the dialogue, by David Nokes and Janet Barron, had a hopeless indeterminacy. The writing felt methodical rather than instinctual; intellectual constructs were imposed on characters rather than there being a sense of impulses emerging from within. Scenes were as short and shapeless as Richardson's letters are prolix and portentous.

This would have mattered more in an old-style 'classic serial' shot in the electronic studio, where long scenes and set piece speechifying would have had to carry the weight of the drama. Today, though, filmic elements can take up the slack. In the all-film format, structure can be choppy and more energetic; close-up photography and sound recording can stress gesture and physicality as much as text; performances can be more raw-edged and less 'classical'; production design can be less neat; music and effects can be omnipresent. In sum, the 'exploratory' visual and aural landscape of film is more of a supple medium for expression than the narrowly 'reproductive' landscape of the video sound stage, as Stuart Hall and others have noted.

All of the above elements were taken advantage of by director Robert Bierman *et al* on the sets of *Clarissa*, and all helped salvage the project from the shortcomings of the writing. If Britain's wig-and-corset dramas are now using cinematic idioms to probe deeper into the heart of experience, there's an analogy to be drawn with the formal innovations of Richardson – who used the novel for the first time on a similar voyage of psychological discovery.

● *Men* was a shock. A low-budget (\$400,000) comedy on the frailty of men made by a German woman, it was an unexpected hit not only in Germany, but also in the US. Suddenly Doris Dörrie was a name, and Hollywood studios showered her with offers of screenplays. In the way of Hollywood studios, they were all comedies about men. She turned them down.

That was in 1985, when she was thirty. She'd already made several shorts and documentaries, and one feature: *Straight Through the Heart* (*Mitten ins Herz*, 1983). *Straight Through the Heart* set the pattern for all Dörrie's films. It was adapted, by her, from one of her own short stories. It was about an outsider: a girl, Anna, who drops out from conventional consumer society, only to fall hard for a rich, cold, arch-consumer man, Armin. It was itself an outsider's film, off-centre, even bizarre – and 'bizarre' is one of Doris Dörrie's favourite words of praise.

Anna dyes her hair blue; she writes letters to herself, which we hear in voiceover; in a last bid to get Armin she steals a baby, and when this fails she murders him. It's a deeply disturbing story, told coolly and brilliantly, in a pared-down, understated, witty and laconic way. Anna and Armin coldly destroy each other, but the only thing that shocks him is the way she decapitates her egg.

Straight Through the Heart was a success at Venice and other festivals, and gave Dörrie her chance to carry on. Since then she's made almost a film a year: all (except one) from her own stories; all "bizarre", in her own words, or "radical", in the critics'; all extremely well made; almost all successful. *Money* (*Geld*, 1989), for instance – in which a dull provincial couple take off on a Bonnie and Clyde-like binge of bank robberies – did well in Germany, as did *Paradise* (*Paradies*, 1986), a dark tale about the hell (hence the title, as Dörrie explains) of dependent love.

In between came *Men* (*Männer*, 1985) – the mega-success, with over six million admissions worldwide. Yet *Men* too is pure Dörrie: off-beat and downbeat, about the collapse of social roles and existential certainties. Julius is a rich and successful conformist (like Armin), Stefan an artistic dropout (like Anna). In the course of this crazy but utterly convincing story they change places. But the great difference from *Straight Through the Heart* is the humour. *Straight Through the Heart* was witty and ironic, and the irony kept us, and Doris Dörrie, at a distance from her characters. *Men* is instead gloomily, warmly hilarious.

Interestingly, *Men* is not Dörrie's favourite film. It's too easy to digest, she says; she's suspicious of its success. I suspect she's more comfortable keeping her distance, not only from her characters, but also from us. This was certainly the case with her next venture, *Paradise*, which she calls her "weirdest" film, and then with *Me and Him* (1987), an adaptation of an Alberto Moravia story and a dialogue between a man and what Dörrie calls, in broad American, "his dick". That she managed to make this movie at all, in Hollywood, was a typically eccentric achievement; but it was also a night-

mare. The backers, Columbia, fought and changed everything she did. And *Me and Him* is Doris Dörrie's only bad movie.

My impression at times is that she has tried to forget all about it – and succeeded. She says things like, "*Men* is the only straightforward comedy I've made", and when I respond with, "But what about *Me and Him*?", she gives a startled laugh and replies: "Oh yes – that's right... I keep forgetting about *Me and Him*, because it really isn't my kind of movie". And I suspect that she's right. It isn't.

Which brings us to *Happy Birthday*, which was premiered at the Hof Festival in October and due to open in Germany in January. This is, triumphantly, her kind of movie. Like *Men*, *Paradise* and *Me and Him*, it's about a man; like *Straight Through the Heart*, it's about sex and violence; like all Dörrie's films, it's about outsiders and insiders, loneliness and love. It has quite a few laughs, but *Happy Birthday* is not a comedy. Dörrie's irony has not moved closer to us, as in the ruefulness of *Men*, but still further away, into angry satire.

The film's German title is *Happy Birthday, Türke!* and it is Dörrie's adaptation of a detective novel starring a Turkish private eye. Turks, of course, constitute the largest group of *Gastarbeiter* and are seen as a major 'social problem' in Germany. They are not German citizens, and have very limited civil rights. They collect in visible groups in the big cities. Racism and xenophobia have recently looked in danger of reaching monstrous proportions in Germany for the second time this century in response to the influx of huge numbers of asylum seekers and ethnic Germans from Eastern Europe and elsewhere. The Turks are a different case, but neo-Nazi thugs do not distinguish.

By choosing a Turkish hero and setting her film in Frankfurt, Dörrie has moved her concern from the inner, existential outsider to the outsider as a current and urgent social problem. And by choosing the particular circumstances of Kayankaya, she has touched on a long-term problem as well, because like thousands of second-generation Turks in Germany, he is caught between the two communities. Kayankaya is something of an extreme case, because orphaned as a baby and brought up by German parents, he speaks perfect educated German and no Turkish. He is, therefore, the complete Dörrie hero: an all-round dissident, a believer to no group at all. As played by Hansa Cypionka, he is a battered, decent, mess.

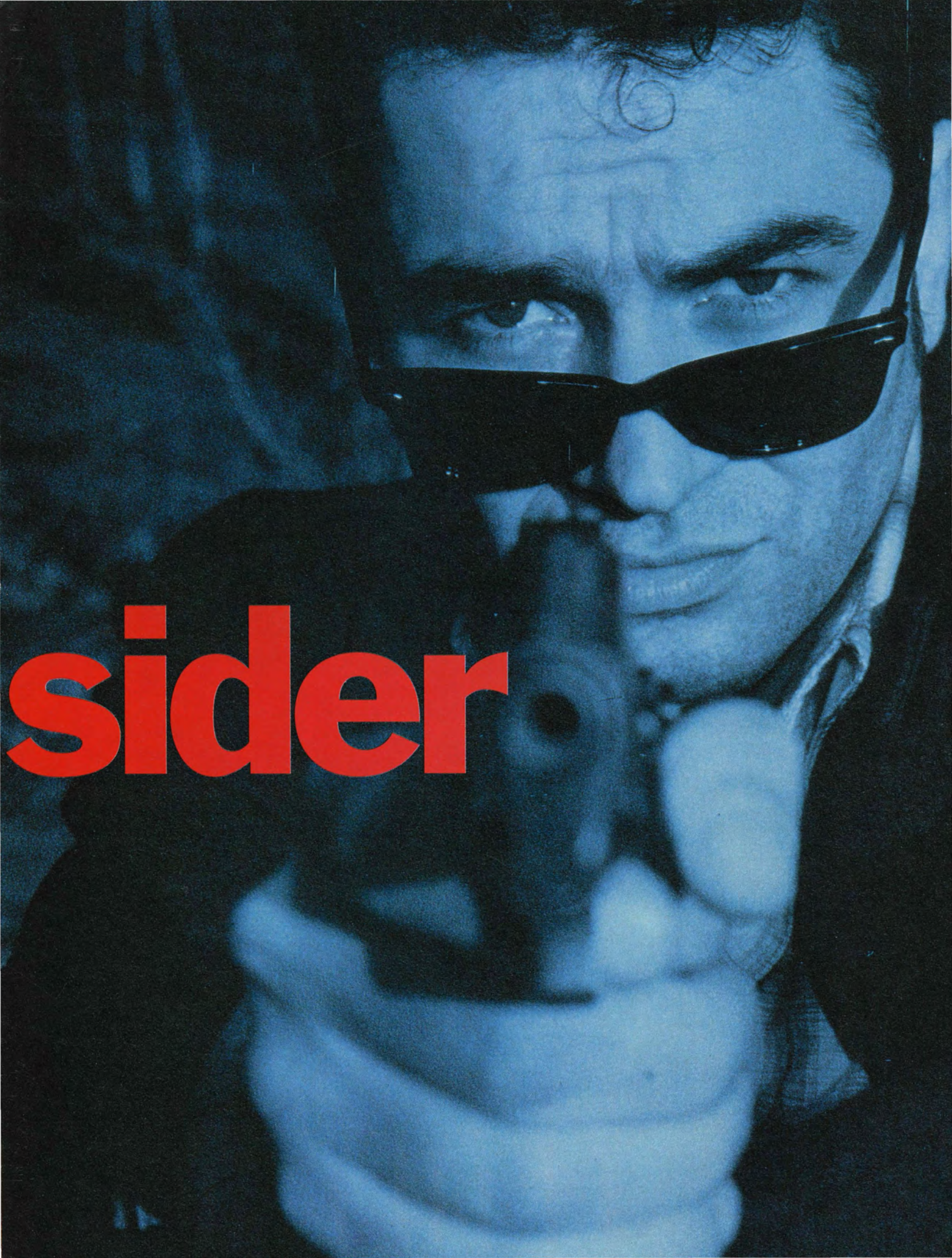
One day, in classic Sam Spade tradition (the film is full of nods to the genre) Kayankaya is approached by a Turkish woman, Ilter (Özay Fecht). Her husband, Ahmed, has disappeared, and she wants him found. Things turn nasty almost immediately. When Kayankaya questions Ahmed's workmates he gets viciously punched; when he visits Ilter he finds a hostile brother, a psychotic sister, and a wall of silence. Then he discovers Ahmed with a knife in his ►

Second generation: Kayankaya, the Turkish private eye who speaks no Turkish at all, right. Top: Doris Dörrie, in love with the bizarre



After the success of 'Men' and the scandal of 'Me and Him', Doris Dörrie has now turned to a private eye film that is set among the Turkish workers of Germany. She talks with Carole Angier

Always the out



sider

◀ back – and is instantly jumped by a sadistic young cop.

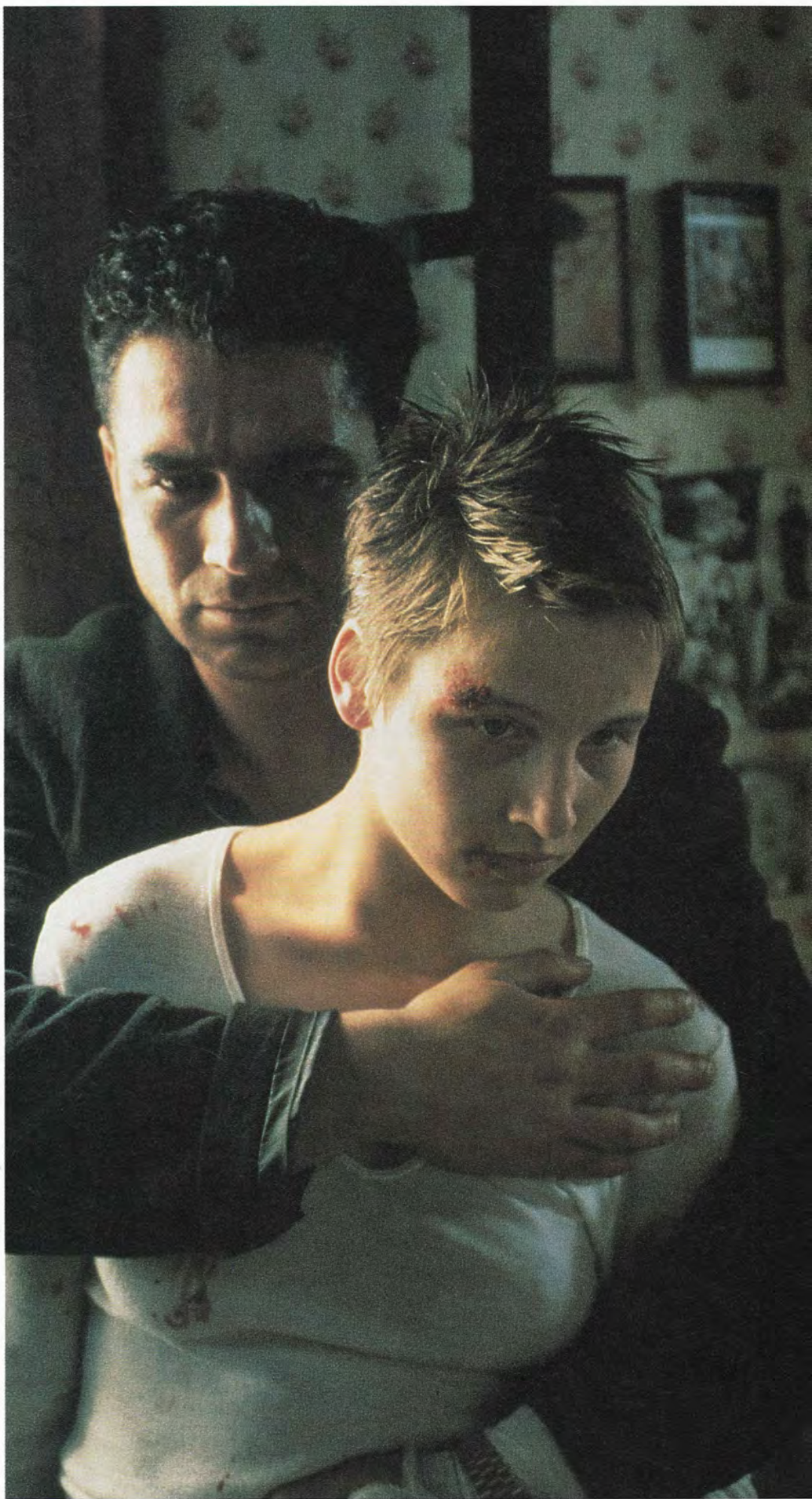
Dörrie is appallingly convincing at violence, and everybody in the film commits it, including Kayankaya himself. When Hanna, a pathetic young addict and prostitute, refuses to answer his questions, he silently destroys her filthy flat. When he gets too close to the truth about Ahmed and his father-in-law, Wassif, he is brutally beaten in his bath. When he finally discovers the truth anyway, he and Hanna force a confession out of the young cop, Eiler, in a scene of such graphic torture that I defy anyone to watch it without gagging.

This is, then, a tough, big city, modern movie, about underclass crime and police corruption, in the new Kathryn Bigelow mould: another female film-maker outmachoing the men. But it is also classic Doris Dörrie. There is the abiding theme of outsiders, and the cruelty with which insiders treat them. This is worse the further inside you go: vicious treatment is meted out to Kayankaya by the rich and powerful, while the poor – his janitor, a station barmaid – though they begin in blind prejudice are capable of kindness by the end.

Connected to this is the theme of the coldness and corruption of the consumerist bourgeoisie: Dörrie's old enemy since Armin of *Straight Through the Heart*. There she explored the fascination of cruelty and power; now she explores its depravity and self-loathing. The streets of Frankfurt are lined with sex shops; the fat and ugly bourgeoisie keep whips and chains in their bedside tables, they stuff themselves with *Wurst* and *Kraut*, they have no children, only dogs. Contrasted to them are the Turks, with Ilter at the bottom of the heap. Not sentimentally – Ilter is no more interested in truth, or even justice, than the corrupt policeman, Futt. But all Futt wants is money and power for himself; what she desperately seeks is survival for her family.

That, it seems to me, is Doris Dörrie's underlying value, for which the Turkish community in Germany has stood since *Straight Through the Heart*. The only decent person in that film was Armin's Turkish housekeeper; the film ended with Anna fleeing towards Turkey with her stolen Turkish child. And the main humanity in *Happy Birthday* is in Ilter's family, despite its failures and crimes: in the loyalty of the adults, in the sweetness of the children. Ilter and Kayankaya become, briefly, lovers, and after they make love, Ilter says: "This is the only thing that helps against death". But it is not sexual love that is the central value in this film. Ilter disappears back into her family and even with Kayankaya is more like a lost mother than a lover; Hanna, we learn, loved not Ahmed but Wassif, who was old enough to be her grandfather. It is families that Futt and the other moral bankrupts lack, families that she and Kayankaya both need – just as Anna did, and tried to steal, in *Straight Through the Heart*.

Happy Birthday, then, is no mere Krimi, no mere genre movie. It continues Doris Dörrie's explorations of her main subject, the problems of conformity, and sets them firmly in the par-





The hired hand: Kayankaya and Hanna in a rare moment of tenderness, left; Ilter and her private eye on the mean streets of Frankfurt, above

ticular and important context of present-day Germany. And it continues, too, her experiments with style. Her films have always been bold, but since her collaboration with her husband, Helge Weindler, as cinematographer (which began on *Men*), they have become still bolder. *Paradise*, for instance, experimented with different camera languages – handheld for the tormented hero Victor, rigid and still for his women – and with a vocabulary of colours, starting with the stale white rooms of Victor's dying marriage and growing steadily redder as he pursues his obsession of love.

Happy Birthday continues both forms of experimentation. Outside, the camera and its objects keep restlessly on the move, on roads, bridges, underpasses. Inside, we are always in medium or close shot, so that people crowd us and each other, their violence and suffering huge and inescapable.

And once again Dörrie and Weindler concentrate on the colour red – this time by eliminating it almost entirely. "Everybody is dressed in blue, grey or purple clothes; we painted every wall, every detail, every prop in special colours, we created lipsticks in special colours", says Dörrie. She gives a technical reason: in order not to look like every other TV detective story set in a big city, to escape a "TV realism" so clichéd by now that it looks artificial. But also, she adds, "to shock": to make sure that whenever red flares out, we notice. And we do.

It's not too much to say, I think, that in *Happy Birthday* red is love, and as rare as love. One scene alone is shot entirely in red: Kayankaya's and Ilter's faces after they make love. We also see them upside down, and this too, I think, is quite deliberate. For red, of course, is the colour of the 'red light district'. And it is typical of Dörrie that she reverses the respectable view, and puts the possibility of real love for Kayankaya here (just as she did for

Victor in *Paradise*). For red also glows in the bar where Kayankaya meets Margarit – who says "Happy Birthday, Turk", who helps him, and whom he rushes off to find at the end. And red bursts out too, perhaps brightest of all, when he goes to Ahmed's rubbish depot and meets a group of dustmen, all in bright orange. The film draws a constant line – as Kayankaya's janitor does physically in the opening frames – between Turks and garbage: in Ahmed's job as a dustman (one of the jobs in Germany most frequently done by Turks); in Ilter's picking up the rubbish in Kayankaya's room; in the janitor blaming him for all the detritus dumped in the corridor. This is what Germans think, Dörrie is saying: *Turks are garbage*. And when the dustmen blaze out in red, we see her dissenting view: *Turks are love*.

Apart from the violence, my only reservation about *Happy Birthday* was its end. Dörrie often seems to have trouble with her endings: for example, both *Men* and *Me and Him* change gear suddenly and sign off with post-modern self-mockery. In these two it works – in *Men* because this is close to its overall style, in *Me and Him* because the final song and dance is the best thing in the movie. But in *Happy Birthday* it doesn't work at all.

This is a serious film, in the best sense of the word 'serious', and it felt like a failure of nerve for our last glimpse of Kayankaya to be purely comic – his bouquet of daisies sticking up behind his head and out of the boot of his car like the daffodil hat stuck up out of the bum at the end of *Carry On Nurse*. It struck me as yet another retreat by Dörrie from engagement with her characters. She is – in both her films and her stories – a brilliant story-teller, but a cold one. What *Happy Birthday* expresses most clearly is hatred for the corrupt and cruel (for Armin, for Futt and Eiler) rather than compassion for their victims.

Indeed, though the main victims are the Turks, I didn't feel much pity for them: Ilter was so obviously strong, and Kayankaya, as the private eye, was always going to win. The character who really moved me was Hanna (Meret Becker): the hopeless, corrupted, childish German prostitute. This was a superb portrait: completely rounded, completely understood. It made me brood about the fact that this film about Turks in Germany wasn't made by Turks: the novelist Jakob Arjouni (it's a pen name) is a German; the star, Hansa Czipionka, is a German; Doris Dörrie, of course is a German. It's not fair to blame her for that. But her camera dwells on Hanna just as it did on Anna eight years ago, suggesting a hidden emotional truth about her film.

Nonetheless, *Happy Birthday* is excellent: Doris Dörrie's best combination of social criticism and technical skill since *Men*. And like *Men*, it is a bold and completely successful intrusion by a female film-maker into a male subject, and by a subversive film-maker into a mainstream genre and style. Doris Dörrie, with her distrust of success, probably doesn't want another hit. But if this is really the case, she should stop making such damn good movies.

Doris Dörrie on 'Me and Him'

The reason I agreed to do a film in Hollywood at all was because of David Puttnam, who was at the time head of Columbia, and whom I trusted because he was European, and knew my movies. He signed the production deal, and everything was cool, and I felt very protected by him. Then less than a week before we started shooting, he was gone. It had never entered my head that this could happen, I was dumbfounded...

Then I got stuck with studio trouble. They hated the movie, partly because it was Puttnam's project, partly because it was about a man talking to his dick, and that's not the mainstream kind of Hollywood movie... They started discussing the voice of the penis with me. Seriously. To them, the voice was much too deep – sexually offensive, they kept saying, because it was a macho kind of voice. They kept saying: "In this country the penis has a different voice". I remember myself yelling at them: "But in Europe a penis speaks this way". There were meetings about this. I was always the only woman, and I could hear this voice ticking away in everybody's head: "What do you know about the voice of a penis?"

I can see the humour of it now, but at the time it broke my heart. And it wasn't just the voice, it was other things too. The music, for instance: "A penis doesn't listen to jazz", they kept saying. They were scared. "Do you seriously believe we could release this movie in Boise, Idaho?", they said. To an American audience they felt it was much too offensive. I remember one head of the studio yelling at me over the phone: "This is the most disgusting, the most sexually offensive movie I've ever seen!" Which I don't think it is. But America is a strange country as far as sexuality goes; they've preserved British puritanism to a degree that no other country has.

I finished the movie, but I had to make too many compromises with it. I do have one version that I really like, the original version, which is differently edited, with a different kind of music, a different voice, and the feel of it is completely different. It's bizarre. It was the straightforwardness of their version that I couldn't bear; by insisting on making it so much on the nose they made it much more obscene than it was to begin with. Originally it was much more about anarchy, and adjusting to society, and abstract ideas. Now it's only about a speaking dick.



Double lives

Strangled desire lies at the heart of Buñuel's 'Belle de Jour', Michael Wood argues, as he asks what is dream and what is reality in this enigmatic film

“I’m stopping now”, Buñuel said in 1967. “I won’t make any more films, either in Spain or in France or anywhere else. *Belle de Jour* is my last film”.

In fact, *Belle de Jour* was the first of Buñuel’s ‘last’ films – that extraordinary sequence of meditations on the displaced and elusive objects of strangled desire: *The Milky Way* (1968); *Tristana* (1970); *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* (1972); *The Phantom of Liberty* (1974); *That Obscure Object of Desire* (1977). These films are often taken to be serene works of maturity, the products of a mind somehow beyond torment and obsession. But the idea seems too tame for the films themselves; it loses their quirks and anger, their continuing sense of sexual trouble. Perhaps the difference between the later and earlier films is largely one of texture, a matter of the old mischief being pursued by glossier means. Buñuel often said he would have liked to have remade *The Exterminating Angel* (1962) with classy English actors – an extreme of barbarism engulfing an extreme of perceived refinement – and we may want to see the technical luxuries of his late films as creating an effect of the same kind. They make the crudities of the heart all the clearer.

Belle de Jour (1967) is set in contemporary Paris: an international film full of the feel of the 60s, with sumptuous photography by Sacha Vierny, fashions by Yves Saint-Laurent, and Catherine Deneuve as a Hitchcock heroine who has strayed into a neighbouring universe. We look at the Paris parks, the Champs-Élysées, the expensive bourgeois interiors; Deneuve models neat little coats and hats, her tidy patent leather shoes finding their hesitating way up a city staircase.

Unlike Buñuel’s two earlier colour films *Robinson Crusoe* (1952) and *Evil Eden* (1956) – where colour suggests an enhancement of the exotic, a form of estrangement – here it allows us to see civilisation admiring itself; it constructs the world as if it were an advertisement, so that we watch it collapse at its supposed centre rather than at its edges as it

erupts into the violence it has called into being and cannot now cancel.

The subject of *Belle de Jour*, Buñuel said, is a woman’s masochism, but it is masochism of a very specialised kind. Séverine, the apparently frigid wife of Pierre, a young doctor, doesn’t take pleasure in pain, she needs a painful route to pleasure. Haunted by fantasies of violence and humiliation, she flees from her husband’s rather abstracted kindness to the regimented sexual duties of a brothel. An ugly and familiar apology for rape hovers in this scenario, and characters repeatedly talk about Séverine requiring the hard hand, the forcing of her will. However, when someone threatens to hit her she fiercely resists, and there are forms of grovelling which clearly disgust her.

Séverine, it seems, is not a cold woman who needs to be bullied into sexual life, but a respectable woman who needs a disreputable context for her consent. She wants to be told what to do, by women as well as by men, so that she can feel she has no choice. There are brief visual hints of sexual abuse and a sense of sin in her childhood, but they seem designed to heighten the atmosphere of secrets and repression, of mingled guilt and fascination about sex, rather than to provide a serious case history. Séverine herself keeps thinking of “expiation” rather than, say, liberation or self-forgiveness or self-understanding – at least until very late in the movie, when she says she wants to free herself (*se délivrer*).

Stanley Cavell compares *Belle de Jour* to *Persona* (1966) and *Two or Three Things I Know About Her* (1966), contemporaneous instances of what he calls “a man’s compulsion to imagine the imagination of a woman”. More specifically, Buñuel seeks to imagine a broken or split imagination, a place of cruel social constructions where marriage is safe but dead and desire has taken refuge in the brothel. This is a woman’s world divided like a man’s, in that it is entirely governed by the double standard, except that the woman, oppressed even in her dreams of escape, works in the brothel, while men just

visit. Séverine cannot connect love and pleasure. What she feels for Pierre, she says to herself, has nothing to do with pleasure, *n’a rien à voir avec le plaisir*. And when she is with her favourite client in the brothel she agrees that although she likes being with him (*se plaît avec lui*), and indeed can’t stay away, the one she really loves is her husband. What she needs, we finally learn, is a steady husband and a louche lover – needs the lover in order to be able to love her husband as she wants to, to carry her pleasure into her love. But then her double life falls in on itself; the separate standards collapse violently into one.

The ending of the story is not so much ambiguous as flatly self-contradictory. Buñuel said that we were not supposed to know what happened, and in fact he gives us two endings. We must, I think, accept them both and see what we can do with the resulting confusion. Either Séverine has exorcised her fantasies by acting them out, and she and Pierre can now live happily ever after. Or the image of the happy couple is itself Séverine’s last wishful dream: in reality, her lover is dead, Pierre is paralysed, knows all about her adventures and will never speak to her again.

The great formal and thematic interest of *Belle de Jour*, as everyone has always felt, is the stealthy insertion of dreams or fantasies into what the film offers us as everyday life. And the way we read these insertions will have a lot to do with our sense of the film’s ending. It’s not that we can’t (usually) tell the difference between fantasy and what is presented as real, it’s that we can’t always tell on entering the fantasy – we learn where we have been when the dream ends and the characters talk about it.

For example, Séverine in the opening sequence daydreams of a trip in an open horse-drawn coach, of Pierre’s insults, the coachmen whipping her, and one of them preparing to rape her. Pierre’s everyday voice sounds over the reverie asking her what she is thinking about, and the film cuts to Séverine’s and Pierre’s bedroom. She says she was thinking ▶



Dream of escape: Catherine Deneuve as the outwardly respectable doctor’s wife, Séverine, left. Unable to carry her pleasure through into her love, she dreams instead of disreputable contexts in which to give her consent, above

◀ about him, they were riding in a coach. Pierre says, "the coach again" (*toujours le landau*) so we know that she has had this dream/daydream before and has told him about it. But how much has she told him? Just about the ride, or also about what comes after it?

Buñuel uses the same procedure in *Tristana* and *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*. Effectively we share the dream as subjective reality, and also share the awakening from it. This is quite different from the method of *Los Olvidados* (1950) or *Robinson Crusoe* or *Mexican Bus Ride* (1951) – or indeed most dream sequences in most movies, where the dreams are clearly stylistically identified as a secondary reality. Here, the dreams are the action. The point is not that they have a material reality, or are present in minds other than the dreamer's, but that they are *not* secondary, that their relation to material reality is precisely what is in question.

An introductory note to the script of *Belle de Jour* describes the film's insertions as "sequences which may be childhood memories, and above all daydreams, in which characteristic obsessions appear and reappear". That "may be" is particularly cagey, and the note goes on to say that these sequences, although imaginary "*en principe*", are not to be distinguished either in image or sound from the sequences which surround them. This isn't quite how the film plays, since several of Séverine's fantasies have a period flavour – the coach, an old-fashioned necrophiliac duke, a duel in frockcoats – while others have clear internal markings of the imaginary: whippings which don't score the back, speech coming from a closed mouth. Still other dreams are so clearly cued that we cannot mistake them for anything other than mental reworkings of events: after her first spell in the brothel, Séverine imagines a herd of bulls with names like "Remorse" and "Expiation", and is then pelted with mud. What is interesting, then, is not the confusion between fantasy and the world of action, but the notion of a parity between them. Each can influence the other; they can get better or worse together or at each other's expense.

The result of all this, of course, is to make us wonder just where the film's last dream or fantasy begins – which pieces of the conclusion



How innocent can an imagination be when it puts desire into practice?

belong in Séverine's mind and which out of it. Like the others, this last fantasy starts without warning, whenever it starts; unlike the others, it has no visible end.

Literally, what happens at the end of the film is this. Séverine's double life collapses in two criss-crossing ways. Husson, a friend of Pierre's, discovers her in the brothel. Marcel, her lover, finds out where she lives and comes to see her. Understanding that Pierre is the "obstacle", as he says, Marcel shoots Pierre, causing severe paralysis, loss of speech, loss of sight. Marcel himself is shot dead by the police while trying to escape. Séverine looks after the helpless Pierre, makes encouraging remarks about the possible return of his sight. Husson visits, and tells Séverine he is going to inform Pierre of her second life – it will make him feel less guilty for being such a burden, he says.

We don't know whether Husson actually means to tell Pierre the story, or whether he actually does; whether he is merely tormenting Séverine or is actually planning to intervene in her life. It's clear, though, that Séverine believes Husson *has* told Pierre. Pierre sits mute, behind dark glasses. Séverine keeps looking at him. Pierre then gets up, takes his glasses off, lays aside his blanket, and asks her, as he did at the beginning of the film, what she is thinking about. She says (again, truthfully) that she is thinking about him. They have a

drink, speak about a holiday, embrace. The jingling sound we associate with the coach of Séverine's dreams, and which started just before Pierre moved, has been getting stronger and stronger. She says, "Do you hear?", goes to the window, sees the coach approaching. It has two coachmen but the passenger seat is empty. It passes, and the camera lingers for a long time on the leaf-strewn road, the sound of the wheels and the bells slowly fading away. The word "FIN" comes up and disappears again quite a while before the image finally vanishes.

There is a way in which we can see Pierre as both paralysed and not paralysed in the everyday world of the film: by introducing a lapse of time between the shots where Séverine is looking at him. This is a manageable strategy, but not a very plausible one, and it seems to me that only a person desperate for a single, 'natural' interpretation would go for it. We might also see Pierre as cured by Husson's revelation – in a sort of moral miracle he would proceed like a saint straight to forgiveness, and would nobly treat Séverine's exploits as if they had never happened. This strikes me as an even wilder move, and there is nothing in the mood of the closing scenes to support it. What is surely strongest here is the sense of two perfectly possible, but perfectly incompatible conclusions to Séverine's story.

Does she then, after all the violence, in the midst of the wreckage of her life, daydream a fresh start: Pierre as he was, the old dialogue, but without nightmares? The arrival of the jingling sounds supports this reading, as does the lingering of the camera on her face as she watches the motionless Pierre. The film ends on an image of love and moral and mental release; it isn't what Séverine has got, but it is what she wants. It is what we want too, and that is why the final shot is so calm and the empty coach feels like such a deliverance.

But the last dream might begin earlier; just after Marcel has visited Séverine in her flat. There are plenty of clues to support this reading too. Séverine is asleep on the sofa, rendered invisible by the sofa's back. The maid tidies up what appears to be an empty room, and we hear shots in the street. Séverine gets up and goes to the window, literally stepping into what



Never at home: Séverine with one of her clients in the brothel in which she works, top; with Pierre, the husband

she loves, above; in a world of expiation and remorse rather than liberation, self-forgiveness or self-understanding, right

may be her dream. Looking down, she sees a car drive off, and a man we guess to be Pierre lying spreadeagled on the pavement. Is this an appropriate but imaginary disaster, the logical conclusion of the meeting of the two men in her life: the criminal tries to kill the doctor, and is then killed? Séverine has to live not with her grief, but with her guilt personified in the form of an invalid husband. Husson would then come to inform Pierre as a culmination of her crime. There is no doubt that Séverine in the hospital, waiting for news of Pierre's condition, feels that she has nearly killed him –

there are faces in the film which are far less ambiguous than words. But what then? The dream would end after Husson's visit, as Séverine sits watching Pierre – would end, in other words, just where the last daydream starts in the other reading. The happy ending would be the simple reality, the killing and attempted killing the ghastly nightmare.

This reading is a little worrying, since it leaves unresolved quite a few things outside Séverine's mind. Pierre presumably still doesn't know of Séverine's other life; Marcel is still a threat; perhaps Séverine will have to go back to

her afternoon stint at the brothel. Does the empty coach then signal not that Séverine isn't dreaming any more, but that her dreams have changed – or worse, that only her double life, as long as it lasts, can keep the coach empty? Or is there a dream within a dream? We (and Séverine) would have left all shared reality behind, never to return. She falls asleep on the sofa and dreams disaster, followed by a dream reparation for that same disaster.

What are we to do with these readings? We probably find ourselves preferring one, whether we feel we ought to choose or not. The problem is how much of the other readings we can hold in our heads as we do this. What we need to know, I think, is not whether our readings are right – several of them may be that – but what their implications are. As William Empson said long ago: "people, often, cannot have done both of two things, but they must have been in some way prepared to have done either; whichever they did, they will have still lingering in their minds the way they would have preserved their self-respect if they had acted differently; they are only to be understood by bearing both possibilities in mind".

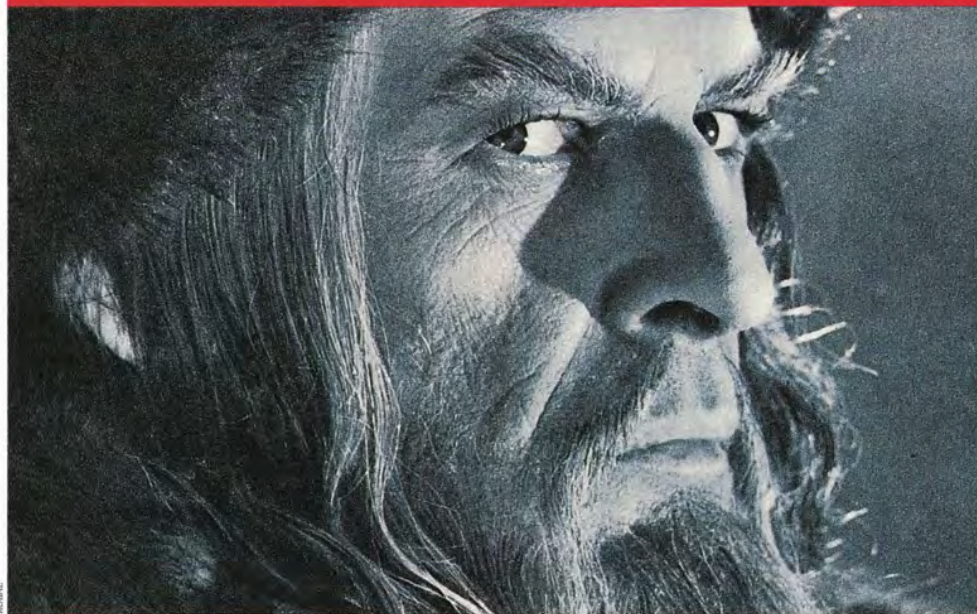
This is clearly as true of interpretative deeds as of any others, although in our case we may want to substitute "followed out the consequences" for "preserved their self-respect". Broadly, either Séverine has to live, however miserably, with the moral disaster her double life has led her to, or she has managed to use her double life to create, albeit by taking great risks, a happy single one. The happy end seems unattuned to the train of (possible) damage in the film; the unhappy one too severely righteous. If we choose, then, we need to remember as much as we can of what we *haven't* chosen, whether it's degrees of damage or the chance of happiness; sexual liberation or the constraints of social and sexual history. The great question in *Belle de Jour* is what Buñuel elsewhere called the innocence of the imagination. How innocent can an imagination be when it puts desire into practice? Are there practices beyond guilt and innocence? The empty coach is where we place our several answers.

● A new print of Buñuel's *'Belle de Jour'* is due to be released later this year



RONALD GRANT

Film acting stretches from Marlene Dietrich to Tina Turner, from Chaplin to EastEnders' Mike Reid – but what is it, asks Raymond Durgnat?



Elegance versus vehemence

● Film's closest relative among the arts is not literature, but theatre. Both are 'performing arts', with actions re-enacted by human performers. In theatre, actors are obviously prime collaborators, co-auteurs with playwright and director. But specialist film criticism has rarely analysed acting, while auteur theory sees great directors as great dictators, their actors helpful pawns at most.

Traditional film theorists contrast the picture stage of theatre (static, unrealistic) with photorealism (mobile, illusionistic). But it's a false comparison, for theatre doesn't need scenic space, only performer presence. The words of the play appear only through the actors' faces, bodies and voices, all properties of the flesh and blood which gives their characters a physical presence, a constancy. But the bodily presence is also that of the actor, in a human, social communion with each spectator. The contradiction dilutes the illusion, but exalts the performer. Theatre's essence and core is cabaret: the performer as him or herself, with direct address and eye-contact of a socio-physical kind.

In film, however, the human presence is illu-

sory, merely part of a succession of pictures which so contain and flatten it that the camera must take over to provide a new picture for each dramatic point – though these cuts further disrupt the actor's constancy of presence. The close-up may permit greater intimacy, but even then the human presence is canned, abstracted, pixilated – dreamed, not social. Film is a pictorial performing art.

But film compensates for its abstractness by a new kind of finesse. The conventional stage requires active projection by face and body; the film close-up passive activity by eyes and lips only – here, the actor's thought is enough. By contrast, long shots may require heavy acting, while split-depth shots may combine a foreground actor who is underacting with a background actor who is overacting. Renoir's ensemble shots cherish diverse acting styles side by side, with each style the actor's own rather than the director's.

Chaplin to Mike Reid

Traditional film theories put the critical emphasis on photorealism, plus that modernist fetish, 'pure film', especially editing. In

these terms, the actor's art is impure: an importation from an alien medium, to be adjudged filmic-realistic or stagey, but of little interest as an art in its own right. Moreover, most traditional film theorists were of the left, and keen on social realism. In this context, film acting seemed imbued with 'bourgeois' ideologies – star glamour, the West End stage.

However, the anti-actor bias could not be absolute. Charlie Chaplin, long adored by all, is a wildly unrealistic comedian-cum-expressionist, blending slapstick with dramatic mime, which he virtually reinvented. His guttersnipe mix of cynical and dainty, with charcoal eyes staring friskily into camera, flipped spectators from laughter to tears and back in the split of a second. Awesome, too, was Greta Garbo's divine discontent and wan warmth; though photorealists alleged that this wasn't acting; the camera was instead revealing some psychic reality, some truth of soul. What credulity: the camera, seeing physical surfaces only, can only ever tell half-truths...

Of course a performance can be elicited, without an actor's art. An Italian neo-realist, asked how he got a child to display grief so convincingly, replied: "I hit him". Vadim claimed that a certain English actor couldn't grieve his screen beloved's death until deceived into believing he was anticipating his *own* character's demise. Sternberg made actors puppets in his patterns; Dreyer and Griffith talked them into trance states; Murnau gave George O'Brien lead-weighted shoes (20lbs each) to get a weary expressionist trudge.

More normal, though, is Cukor and Jack Lemmon, working on a worry scene and ditching the script in favour of Lemmon's own real-life reaction to worry – stomach cramps. Michael Powell once told an actor: "Every time you come on stage, the whole play stops dead. What are you going to do about it?" In both cases, the director wants something which he asks the actor to create. And a vivid or complex character requires a stream of 'somethings', of lively details, unexpected yet right – a "montage of revelations", as Eisenstein might have said. The actor is the character's auteur (and some actors – Dirk Bogarde for one – are gifted novelists).

Creative actors can rewrite the story. Shakespeare wrote Hamlet's words, but far from defining Hamlet, these leave room for many different, even opposite Hamlets from different actors. The same process can be seen in the way Lemmon 'Lemmonises' every role he plays, not as a repetitive type, but as a range of characters, like an auteur's sensibility. Jeanne Moreau's persona and characters too are hers, within diverse directorial keys – Truffaut's dark euphoria, Antonioni's languor, Losey's brutality, the *luxe, calme et volupté* of her own *Lumière* (1976). Each star is a genre: "It's a Joan Crawford film".

Often, indeed, the film's director may only block out broad movements. Or the camera positions and *mise en scène* may be chosen to serve the actor's style rather than vice versa. The actor may direct the director, as did Mae

West, or Marlene Dietrich after Sternberg, who sometimes co-directed herself using a mirror mounted beside the camera. Clark Gable, convinced that Cukor was over-feminising *Gone With the Wind*, had him replaced by Victor Fleming. Barbra Streisand reputedly has scenes rewritten ten or twenty times, each draft deleting dialogue or making it blank and transposing its shifts, twists and uncertainties into performance. Facial expressions can change much faster and more subtly than words can tell, while film's visual form makes spectators preternaturally sensitive to body language.

By looking at film actors and their roles (often written for them), we can trace changing real-life behavioural styles. For example, the ever-hilarious Robertson Hare was not merely the embarrassedly de-trousered wimp, but the epitome of 30s Metro-Land: his slickly ovoid pate, glittering eyes, booming voice, polysyllabic jargon ("indubitably"), snappily streamlined movements and brisk changes encapsulate an ideology of high-speed respectability. The favourite character actors on whom every film and television industry depends comprise in themselves a cultural typology.

Consider five generations of Cockneys. Gus Elen in 30s Pathétones did 1900-style costermongers, hard-edge scrappers "wiv a leg-o-mutton fist", his crinkle-crinkle diphthongs and lisp faintly echoing the 'w' for 'v' of Dickensian Cockneys. Gordon Harker did interwar types, rising to NCO status: "I'm in charge 'ere", he insists throughout Powell's *The Phantom Light* (1935), before becoming Inspector Hornleigh (1939). Jack Warner was the satisfied Cockney, post-1945 (even as Norman Wisdom's cataclysmic clumsiness paraphrased working-class ambivalence). Today, Mike Reid stoutly defies the 'politically correct' storylining of *East-Enders*, which condemns his patriarchal prole to nothing but clumsy error.

An actor's range of types often reveals class overlaps and 'interclasses', while the differences between role-equivalent actors reveal options and parameters within their social function. The fine detail of gestures, stances and intonations exposes individual attitudes and their recombinations in specific situations, thus going far deeper than mere typology.

Baranovskaja to Monroe

Early film acting owed less to 'legitimate' theatre than to music hall. Acting evolved very fast and very diversely, and modern understatement is visible by 1910. Silent film pantomime, often confused with staginess, was invented specifically for film, in lieu of words, actors often distinguishing pantomime and acting. Lillian Gish imbued her pantomime with a mercurial expressionism; Emil Jannings mixed slow expressionism with ham pathos and heavy stage projection. These expressionisms retreated before talkie realism and modern understatement, but can still work when dared. Tina Turner's Acid Queen in *Tommy* (1975) is at once operatic, filmic and hysteric-convulsive Theatre of Cruelty. Vehement acting has returned to favour, partly because



Preparing the face:
Nikolai Cherkasov in
'Ivan the Terrible',
left; Jack Lemmon in
'The Apartment', top;
Charlie Chaplin, the
comedian-cum-
expressionist in 'City
Lights', centre; Joan
Crawford, a genre in
herself, in 'Sudden
Fear', bottom

energy has replaced glamour as an entertainment desideratum.

Russian Bolshevik formalism, anti-individualist and obsessed with montage, further misprised the actor, as in Kuleshov's *Experiment*, where a shot of acting star Mosjoukine, completely expressionless, reads as hunger, love or grief, depending on its juxtaposition with a soup plate, a baby or a coffin. But only expressionlessness is so transformable. 'Rich', psychologically specific acting resists most contexts and might easily have shattered Kuleshov's montage effect by implying that Mosjoukine was in a different room, or not looking at the soup, or looking at it but thinking about something else. Here, as so often, acting would direct montage.

'Bourgeois' Hollywood well understood the reciprocal relation of editing and acting. When Mamoulian asked Garbo to think of nothing for the final shots of *Queen Christina* (1933), the effect could be seen as Kuleshov-like, except that blankness is a characteristic expression of grief, as in 'numb emptiness'. Pudovkin's *Mother* (1926) wonderfully fuses editing and acting, partly because its heavily melodramatic tale

requires only fixed, static expressions and partly because the principal actress, Vera Baranovskaja, was a star of the Moscow Arts Theatre, where Stanislavski's Method inspired actors to research thoroughly every detail. Since Stanislavski's Method later inspired the New York Actors' Studio, Baranovskaja is acting to the same basic principles as Marilyn Monroe in *Bus Stop* (1956).

Nob-class style

Eisenstein would set acting students to model their characters on the owl, the lion and the bear; in Meyerhold's biomechanics, an actor might express fury by turning a back somersault. Nonetheless, as often happens when an avant-garde's overspecialisation meets mainstream human interest, wonderful things can happen. In Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* (1944), the attuned spectator feels almost physically every stiff head-tilt and eyeball-roll of the mentally martyred Tsar. The film is a symphony of muscular kinesis working against volumetric costumes, back-bending architecture and sculptures distortive of body image; it is biomechanics turned expressionist.

From the 30s, social and documentary realisms dwelt on contrasts between actors and 'real people playing themselves'. This was perhaps understandable, in that early talkies abounded with stage actors – in Peter Ustinov's words: "battalions of elegant understaters, immaculate actors of the du Maurier school, who were able to play anything from cuckolded husbands to dainty blackmailers, and from chiefs of Scotland Yard to masterminds of underworld gangs, without their assumed characteristics in any way being allowed to affect their performances". To West End theatre audiences, nob-class style was their great appeal, reflecting the English gentleman's superiority to whatever social function he happened to find himself performing. The Grand Panjandrum of the style was George Arliss, who could be fascinating in the right role, for example as Disraeli. John Gielgud retained the class stylishness, but combined with the 'intellectualism' he pioneered in the 30s. The mixture can read as fastidious snobbishness, whence, perhaps, Sir John's erratic film career until a cluster of otherwise disparate films – Resnais' *Providence* (1977), Wajda's *The Conductor* (1979), Steve Gordon's *Arthur* (1982) – all pitted his air of loftily egoistic sensitivity against various vulgarities, especially the supreme ones: illness and death.

The documentarists' resort to 'real people' entailed no 'hands-off' realism. Harry Watt's rule of thumb was to select a bumptious extrovert and then bash, grind and file his springy spontaneity into shape. The blonde sorter in *Nightmail* (1936) looks like a classic case. As for neo-realism, *La Terra Trema* (1948), Visconti's epic fresco, depends on fisherfolks' physiognomies and physiques, testifying to work as second nature in ways few actors could satisfy. Nonetheless, neo-realism generally was far less purist than Zavattini's manifestos suggest. When Selznick offered to finance *Bicycle* ▶

◀ *Thieves* (1948), de Sica would gladly have accepted Henry Fonda, but drew the line at Cary Grant (as would most non-realists!). Neo-realism was as fertile a seedbed of superstars as the Actors' Studio, what with Mangano, Magnani (already a stage star), La Lollo, Loren...

By 1960 new technologies had vastly expanded film's powers of observation of real behaviour without direction. But throughout Jean Rouch's *Chronique d'un été* (1961), real people spend ten minutes clumsily waffling on about real feelings which an actor could communicate in a one-second glance. Renoir's last films became shambolic through an associated mystique of spontaneity. But real, spontaneous behaviour is in fact highly opaque to real feelings, since behaviour aims at manipulative action, which means masking most feelings from both others and oneself. Fiction as a genre requires actors: for precision, reliability and craft.

Meanwhile, acting generally became more textured, principally because 'kitchen sink' tendencies 'democratised' acting styles, while various acting Methods and the 'information explosion' made them more thoughtful. (Some of Kazan's *A Face in the Crowd*, 1957, already looks like post-cinéma vérité.) Modern actors show unprecedented skill in indicating or even reconstructing regional and period behaviours (many Merchant-Ivory films more or less embalm their characters in period).

However, 60s ciné-radicalisms depersonalised film theory once more. Brecht's admirers, who were auteurists, contrasted his didactic clarity of line with 'bourgeois realism', which they imagined as socially uncritical clutter, a naive 'mirror up to nature'. In fact, Brecht's own style came from the arch-bourgeois Max Reinhardt, whose actors "tended to signify much more than to make live".

Powerhouse artistes

Feminist critics of the 70s became newly sensitive to star personae like Joan Crawford and helped to rehabilitate Hollywood glamour acting, which an earlier generation of left-realists had invariably condemned. Feminists concentrate on tragedy queens or sex-war combattants like Doris Day. But it's also worth vindicating other, more affirmative unfashionables such as Anna Neagle, who shares Crawford's galumphing wholeheartedness. Both actresses were dancers, born around the same time, and share a period style once conspicuous in real behaviour – a compromise between bold dignity (Edwardian), flapper levity (post-1918) and stiff-upper-lip (required by life's troubles). But Neagle's politely cheerful stoicism implies a 'lady-like' faith in social honour, where Crawford's glumness tones into *noir* distrust. However unfashionable the Neagle style, it is vivid testimony to an ideology so passé it has now become new again. Moreover, most people behave unfashionably, and real life abounds in 'archaic' styles.

Those ever-popular fusions of cabaret and fairytale, *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) and *The Wizard* (1978), also revolve around powerhouse female

cabaret artistes – Judy Garland and Diana Ross – set against men who are presented as straw, tin, cowardly and despotic-but-weak. Here female performance is the ego core, partly because the story sketches the American girl's passage into 'white witch' womanhood, but also because the stars' dynamic sensitivity attracts spectator responsiveness, regardless of either sexuality or gender.

Body awareness

Cinesemiotics and cinestructuralisms were hogtied by verbal models and various anti-bourgeois prejudices. Barthes instructed us to analyse stills, though they completely suppress the movement which is the essence of performance and of film. Moreover, performance involves not just visual clues, but an empathetic-kinaesthetic *Einfühlung*, a *participation mystique*, an imaginative sense of the Other as basic as one's own body awareness.

A Barthesian media-education text about body language in *Coronation Street* ran: "Elsie here, arms folded (and along with all the other interpretative clues we have open to us) clearly connotes aggression, staying her ground, no nonsense; but why folded arms in women should so signify this is by no means clear". Newspapers, including *The Guardian*, mocked the analysis, and hackles rose, as often when specialists make heavy weather of intuitive readings. Body language and psycho-physiological theories vastly clarify matters. In this stance (and not only in women) the arms metaphor a barrier, rampart the shoulders, enlarge the body shape (apparent strength and immobility) and display muscle half-ready, not threatening attack, yet positively refusing movement. We understand the stance because we've seen it and done it ourselves, mixed with the same feelings. It's also a quiet form of Eisenstein's biomechanics.

"I, the subject, is the flag composed of the spinal column and the respiratory box. It is the bust. It is the Self, the outline, the attitude". So writes Jean-Louis Barrault, the actor-mime of *Les Enfants du paradis* (1945), in *Réflexions sur le théâtre*, which is to acting theory what Eisenstein is to film theory. If Barrault worked from the inside outwards, Bogarde developed Barrett the butler in *The Servant* (1963) by working from the outside inwards: starting with the clothes and selected traits observed in real people, then joining their characteristics with intuited inner attitudes. A total psychology isn't required; indeed, Stanislavskism easily becomes too encyclopaedic, crushing intuitive imagination, or, in its American versions, fixating on motivation, whereas acting is about experience. Sometimes just one trait is an actor's creative flashpoint; for Charles Laughton, everything flowed once he had found his character's walk. Many actors combine approaches – research, intuition, collaboration and so on.

But the magic begins when actors, after all their preparation, start to respond to specifics devised individually by the other actors. It's then that ensemble playing really takes off and becomes a revelation to all concerned.

Tilda Swinton

A committed European actress, Tilda Swinton talks with Michael O'Pray about playing men and performing politics. Photographs by Jacqueline Lucas Palmer

Tilda Swinton is an unusual actress. She is regarded as one of the finest acting talents of her generation in this country, yet has achieved this position paradoxically through working totally outside and against the so-called mainstream. In film and theatre alike, her performances are notable for their commitment to work which is aesthetically risky (for example, the experimental films of Derek Jarman, Cordelia Swann, Klaus Wyborny), as well as politically provocative.

Tilda Swinton's idea of acting is one that runs against the present current. As a believer in Brechtian acting methods, she embraces a European tradition opposed to dominant Hollywood methods. Her sympathies lie with a lineage stemming from the anti-naturalism of Meyerhold in pre-Revolutionary Russia and passing through Eisenstein to Brecht before finding its cinematic proponents in Godard, Bresson and Straub/Huillet.

Central to the Brechtian method is a belief that drama has a social and political responsibility, not only to entertain an audience, but to educate it. But Swinton is critical of a political theatre that is purely what she calls "site specific". For her, the political or social point can be made better when the canvas is large, no matter what its historical context. She sees cinema and theatre as revealing a universal stance and not a local one: Benjamin Britten's *War Requiem*, Virginia Woolf's *Orlando*, Pushkin's *Mozart and Salieri*, Jarman's *The Last of England* can all connect creatively and intelligently with our lives. And certainly the Brechtian cinema promised by the British left in the late 70s and 80s has not been realised through political documentary, but through the exotic, wayward, angry and ultimately utopian films of Derek Jarman, in which Swinton's role has been crucial. As history should have told us, the radical edge has come from the most surprising direction – favouring, as always, the knight's move.

Born into an upper-class Scottish military family, Swinton spent a year working illegally in the South African townships before going to Cambridge University in 1980. When she met Jarman in 1985 to work on *Caravaggio* (1986), he was receiving his first break from the film establishment since 1979, when he had made *The Tempest*. Swinton had never worked in film but had begun to establish a reputation in theatre – largely for a memorable performance at the Edinburgh Fringe in Peter ▶



◀ Arnott's play *White Rose*. Her more recent work in theatre has also won her high praise, particularly her stage performances as a woman passing as a man in *Man to Man* by Manfred Karge (made into a film by John Maybury, to be released later this year). Karge also directed her to great acclaim in another woman-playing-man role, as Mozart in Pushkin's *Mozart and Salieri*.

In Swinton's film work, the story has been rather different. Wyborny's film *The Open Universe* has not been seen here at all, nor has her other German film work with Cynthia Beatt and Christoph Schlingensief. And her excellent performance in Joan Jonas' video *The Laxdaela Saga* also awaits a screening. Her most visible work has been with Derek Jarman, and much of her reputation and image inevitably rests on his output over the past six years.

To trace Swinton's career is to encounter many of the key political and social issues of the 80s – gender politics, militarism, Aids, the sexual repression of gays, class antagonism, the new rise of fascism in Europe, and the ancient problems of surviving any social system as a human being, especially as a woman. We have to go back to an older generation to find actresses of her quality who attempted to make links between their radical political engagement and their work – Vanessa Redgrave in Britain and Jane Fonda in the US are the most obvious examples, although both were markedly different from Swinton, most importantly in being 'stars'.

"If there was any model at all for me as an actress when I arrived at Cambridge, it was Brecht's actress, Helene Weigel. It's to do with having a sustained body of political work and the absolute importance of control. And Weigel ended up running a theatre company.

"I'll tell you a quick story about Brecht which is really important. Helene Weigel cried on the opening night of one of Brecht's plays and a critic commented that she was identifying with the character, she has lost herself in the character. Brecht replied, and this is the last word on this, that Helene Weigel was crying for the character. There is always a commentary there. The performer is always there. It's rather like when you see those large-scale puppets and you see somebody in black is working them. It's the same sort of thing: as an actor, one is enabling, one is not the character. One is literally modelling the character's behaviour and commenting on it all the time".

Swinton cites Bresson's use of actors and his renaming of them as "models" as exemplary, too, of an approach which is essentially anti-naturalistic and anti-empathetic. Her



Off camera: Swinton preparing for Isabella in Derek Jarman's 'Edward II', surrounded by the resources of her work

performance as Isabella in Jarman's *Edward II* (1991), her famous dress-cutting scene in the final sequence of his *The Last of England* (1987) and the scene on the steps in his *War Requiem* (1989), where she steps out of the nurse role and utterly remodels the part, all show a use of excess and of pathos in which, as Roland Barthes remarks in relation to Eisenstein, the actor's "expression... signifies an idea – which is why it is excessive – not some natural quality". This aesthetic runs counter to the "facial affectations of the Actors' Studio", as it does to the restraint of 'traditional' British acting.

"The great English acting tradition is very specific. It has never translated well over the Atlantic and I think this is because the English (although not the Celts) find it so difficult to discharge their emotions freely in their own lives that the concept of somebody doing it publicly is threatening and they have to believe that it's fake. People always say about Olivier that he had an enormous range and great technique, but I believe he just liked playing, liked showing-off. I liked the fact that he really enjoyed himself acting. But to say he was a terribly skilled craftsman distances it, makes it all very mysterious".

Swinton's own commitment to Brechtian principles suggests ways of seeing Jarman's work in a neo-

The English find it so difficult to discharge their emotions freely in their own lives

Brechtian fashion. There is no doubt that his characteristic use of the tableau has a Brechtian dimension. The implication of the tableau as an aesthetic strategy is that meaning is not the summation of a narrative, but is segmented by highly defined scenes in which the meaning is explicitly constructed and demonstrated. In Jarman's non-dialogue, anti-narrative films, the physical and visual setting-up of the scene in all its elements, including the actors, expresses the meaning as a gesture: what Brecht called the "social gest". Such films defy 'subject matter'; they are not about something, but rather are a series of images, each of which addresses the audience in the gesture of "criticism, strategy, irony, propaganda, etc". They have moral force, in that sense, as images.

Jarman's fondness for performers (poets, pop personalities) instead of actors similarly drives a wedge between actor and part: watching Toyah Willcox play Miranda in *The Tempest* we are constantly aware that it is Willcox playing Miranda, an effect strengthened by Jarman's *mise en scène* and liberal policy of actor interpretation. Naturalistic subsumption of the actor to the role is largely eschewed. Equally, Jarman's devices of excess, exaggeration and quotation, of interspersing song, music, dance in narrative (witness the anti-naturalistic device of Annie Lennox's appearance in *Edward II*) also create Brechtian distancing effects.

Jarman describes his films as "collaborative ventures" with Swinton, and remarks that "of all the people I've worked with, Tilda is the one who transforms the screen. I haven't found a male equivalent". If we look at the female roles in

Jarman's films prior to *Caravaggio*, there are only two major examples: the dispersed female images of *Jubilee* (1978) and the excellent use of Willcox as childlike innocent in *The Tempest*. In many ways, Jenny Runacre's two roles as Elizabeth I and the gang-leader Bod in *Jubilee* are recurring icons in his work – the sensitive 'good mother' or Madonna figure (a desexualised and idealised image of femininity) and the 'bad', sadistic female who is nevertheless a keen intelligence within the text.

Swinton has played both icons, although until *Isabella* the favoured role was the Madonna-like figure. What Swinton brought to these roles over and above a certain look or image was a centre of gravity, a sense of presence and personal disturbance within a more generalised, inevitably abstract chaos and turmoil. In films without dialogue, where expression is vital, Swinton was not simply iconic, but also a nexus of thoughts and feelings. For example, in *The Last of England* Swinton represents, among other things, the loss and sacrifice of love within social and political repression. And in the end she also represents anger, rage and frustration in the face of that reality. As Swinton cuts up her wedding dress, swirling dervish-like in the night to a rising musical crescendo, the 'social gest' comes to the fore. The film's characteristic non-dialogue structure, referring back to silent cinema, underlines the gesture of the body in a choreography that is reminiscent of the scene on the steps in *War Requiem*.

"*War Requiem* is a piece of music which was a script for a film. Apart from the odd image, we did make up a lot as we went along. The only

reason I'm on the screen at all is because of the soprano voice, which has a most extraordinary aria. What happened structurally was that Derek was not there when we shot it. He told me and the cinematographer to do what we wanted to this music. The film is a silent film, which interests me because I think that cinema has gone downhill since people started talking in it. One of the luxuries of doing *War Requiem* was that we had a score we could play to, as they did in the silent cinema days. Not since the days of Lillian Gish has this happened.

"What I wanted to image in the film was something about the powerlessness of the position of women in war, the inability to express anger about it or to witness it on a frontline basis, at least in the First World War. What the frustration must have been of picking up the pieces but not being there when the blood was spilt; the indignity of having silently to cope with what one might have wanted to stop happening in the first place. I wanted to cast a contentious image – the image of the weeping woman. If you notice I don't cry; it was very important not to weep.

"It is my method, and has been for a while, to creep up on the image and deconstruct it from within. The music was playing and I'm showing the awareness of that and also showing that there is both a pernicious and a celebratory aspect to war. One can be romantic about war and I wanted to look at that briefly – the possibility of getting off on the romanticism. While this is performance, there is also the inevitability for me of the work being to some extent autobiographical. I've

had discussions with feminists who have quibbled with the image of the weeping woman, but I had had a similar experience myself which made me know that this is not an unrealistic scene. A cliché is a cliché because it is often true. Women, and men too, weep about their sons, daughters and lovers being killed in war situations, so there was a point of reality within it for me".

What has been described as Swinton's chameleon presence in films is none other than an ability and desire to range wide across roles. She remarks that she finds no difficulty playing a male role; in fact, if anything, playing women may be slightly more demanding. Her dedication to a behavioural-cum-Brechtian acting method makes such remarks and judgments utterly unremarkable. Certainly, her role in *Man to Man* is totally committed physically – the bad teeth, bare dirty face and exaggerated male stances. And typically, she found that one method of learning to play a man, or a woman passing as a man, was to strap on a penis-like object so that she could understand male sitting and stance in general. This refusal to identify so-called maleness with an essentialist psychological state reflects certain feminist positions on gender.

"Looking at the constraints of gender programming, not gender *per se*, is an abiding interest of mine. *Man to Man* is about a woman who dresses as a man; *Orlando* is about a youth who becomes a woman; Mozart was a genius and so was androgynous! Both *Man to Man* and *Orlando* are about being a realised human being. In *Man to Man*, a woman in order to survive cannot

I don't feel that it's any more difficult for me to behave as a man than as a woman

be a woman and so has to play out her life in the guise of a man by modelling male behaviour. She ends up thoroughly confused in old age. And *Orlando* is about the development of a human being. There is a fine tradition in the theatre of boys playing women, an original tradition. And a later tradition, when women were allowed on the stage, of women playing boys: as in the pantomime boy. The precedents are there. I don't feel it is any more difficult for me to behave as a man than as a woman. It is just as elusive a thing to find out the way of modelling female behaviour, possibly more so.

"What distinguishes working in theatre from film is energy, I think. You can learn and develop the technique for film. And you can fight it too. Concentration is of paramount importance. When you are looking into a camera you are actually looking at human beings, or at least at one human being at a time, which is how it is received. It is different from looking into a theatre audience and addressing that audience, which for me is a powerful and useful thing and for the audience an empowering thing. The contact is more intimate; they are aware of being looked at.

"In cinema, I look for the gap, which for me is between what is expressed and what is not expressed. Silence in the cinema is very

important. If the gap exists, then the magic begins to happen because the question is asked, what is it we are hearing? Why is it that it is *this* that is chosen to be said or displayed and not that other thing which I think is going on? And why aren't we hearing or seeing that? This leads us to question and to view intelligently.

"In other words, any person on the screen has a choice about what they say and do. We have to be interested in that. In film, in front of the camera, there is a drawing in of energy, whereas in theatre one has to push out more – it's often simply a matter of the space of theatre, when an audience can extend in front of you for a hundred yards".

Swinton is perhaps at the cusp of a change in her work, brought about by what she sees as a more optimistic funding situation for the kind of films she supports. The financing of *Orlando* in terms of millions and not thousands of pounds and the critical and commercial success of *Edward II* may signal a better climate for such work. Equally, that John Maybury with *Man to Man* is making his first feature after years of work either in pop-promos or more marginal, 'art cinema' gives room for optimism about the future.

Swinton's perception of this work as mainstream and of the mainstream as marginal is characteristic. The commercial success of Greenaway's *Prospero's Books* (1991), Jarman's *Edward II*, and of work by 'experimental' directors like Gus Van Sant, David Lynch (of course), Martin Scorsese (forever experimental) and Paul Verhoeven bodes well. Whether the price to pay for 'buying in' to the industry will be too high in the end still remains to be seen.

Swinton's vision of the marginal as mainstream is avant-gardism differently phrased. When art split from culture in the nineteenth century, the values, the critique, the political and social desires of a society were embodied in the work of a few, neglected until they could be repressively tolerated, as Marcuse claimed. For an actress who is continually offered mainstream roles and salaries, the refusal is made on a day-to-day basis. In a culture which at present offers hardly any political basis (the left almost dissolved by the past decade), decisions have to be made carefully and precisely about scripts, work situations, collaborations, issues.

"Actors are asked about their personal lives and the reason for this is the assumption that their personal lives are not in the films. My personal life is in the films. I also have no stories about how unbelievably difficult it is to play a certain role – I did not check into the Betty Ford clinic to research Isabella!"



Never natural: Swinton playing a woman playing a man in John Maybury's new film version of Karge's 'Man to Man'

A laugh a minute

Andy Medhurst

Comedy/Cinema/Theory

Andrew S. Horton (ed), University of California Press, \$35, 251pp

Affairs to Remember:

The Hollywood Comedy of the Sexes

Bruce Babington and Peter William Evans, Manchester University Press,

£12.95, 310pp

Some books have great titles and others do not. *Comedy/Cinema/Theory* is a stinker (not to mention peculiarly dated, with those really/rather/70s oblique strokes). However, the odour it exudes has more to do with a problem that bedevils analysis of comedy, causing critics to go through contortions of remorse about having become their own worst nightmare: the humourless academic. After all, what kind of pervert wants to unravel a gag, scrutinise a pratfall or deconstruct a custard pie?

So the critics retreat into apology, which tends to take two forms. First, the overcompensating justification, the solemn assertion that Comedy Is a Serious Business That We Have a Duty to Explore. Then, often generated by the first strategy, there's the self-deprecating reassurances that The Critic Still Has a Sense of Humour. The dust jacket of *Comedy/Cinema/Theory* tells us that this is a book in which film comedy is "taken seriously – but not too seriously". No other form of cultural criticism seems so afraid of its own shadow.

The stricture that writing about comedy needs to be some kind of stand-up routine does not prevail in other genres – nobody would expect an article about the horror film to be terrifying, for example. Among the best accounts of Hollywood comedy, Andrew Britton's incisive analyses of two comic personas – Katharine Hepburn: *The 30s and After* and Cary Grant: *Comedy and Male Desire* – hardly overflow with Wildean *bons mots*; but their strength lies in their refusal to reduce comedy to a lifeless body to be dismembered. Britton's work retains a crucial commitment to the importance of the comic mode – an unshakable belief that comedy matters.

Too many of the pieces in Horton's collection lack this essential ingredient. There is ingenuity, there is cleverness, there are deft applications of theoretical models to individual films, there are even moments when one is persuaded to forget what a monument to tiresome self-adulation Jerry Lewis really is. But only once or twice does one get the exhilarating sense that comedy reveals and illuminates in a way that other cultural forms cannot.

In two of those moments, Lucy Fischer offers a feminist challenge to the patriar-

chal norms of comic theory, while Peter Lehman explores the multiple ramifications of the penis-size joke. Both writers balance a sly lightness of touch with a shrewd awareness of the ideological importance of the issues. Peter Brunette plunges bravely into the deliriously violent world of the Three Stooges, boldly claiming that his project challenges traditional standards of academic decorum. Go for it, Pete, I hollered from the sidelines; but then I stumbled over phrases like "Here, I think, a kind of Derridean perspective emerges from Bakhtin's notion of the carnivalesque...". No doubt, but there must be better ways of putting it.

Brunette here invokes the two intellectual influences which preside over the Horton collection. Their presence marks a welcome shift away from the tendency found in so much comic analysis to turn to Freud as the ultimate authority. It's a cliché (but one I find irresistible) that Freud's thoughts on jokes are hampered by the fact that none of his examples is funny; but more importantly, the Freudian argument, if it works at all, only does so for single gags – and comedy films (even *The Naked Gun*) are much more than that. The Bakhtinian model of the carnivalesque is seized upon by a number of con-

Carnival capers: the delirious violence of the Three Stooges qualifies, top; the medical mayhem of 'Carry On Doctor' is ignored, bottom



tributors as a way of unlocking the pleasures and politics of the comic experience. This is not surprising, since the reckless, raucous, badly behaved spree of the carnival offers a far more sensuous, flexible paradigm for dealing with comedy than the sober algebras of psychoanalysis.

From fart jokes to drag queens, carnival's delight in excess, inversion and bodily functions continues to underpin much of what we consider funny – where could you find a more perfectly libidinous, definitively voracious illustration of Bakhtin's 'grotesque body' than Viz's Fat Slags? As this example indicates, the carnivalesque model is not without problems for sexual politics. But even so, no other theoretical model comes so close to capturing the palpable, oozing joys of low comedy. Having said that, the Bakhtin-inspired essays are a joyless collection: the image of the staid, repressed professors in Hawks' *Ball of Fire* comes to mind – and Horton's posse have no Barbara Stanwyck on the horizon to loosen them up. (By contrast, Jeff Nuttall's criminally out-of-print *King Twist*, a celebration of the music hall and film comedian Frank Randle, is an example of a study of carnivalesque comedy that manages to bring to life the comic texture of the material it analyses.)

The Derridean idea of language as a game in which meaning can never be fixed, and in which strands of self-reflexivity chase one another in endlessly playful spirals, is also undoubtedly relevant to a great deal of comedy – puns, wordgames and parody, for example. But there remains a key political question that the Derrideans scrupulously shun: that is, the tendency of so much 'deconstructive' humour to remain locked in a self-referential circle which knows only the world of other texts. (The more deranged post-structuralists will no doubt argue that there is no 'real world' out there – as Baudrillard pointed out in his tremendously observant and sensitive comments on the Gulf War.)

A comparison of two British television series is illuminating in this respect. *Sticky Moments*, in which gay comedian Julian Clary sends up traditional game shows, and *Vic Reeves' Big Night Out*, wherein the eponymous compere mocks a range of light entertainment tropes and styles, have both been cult successes. Both are impeccably deconstructive, taking elements from familiar 'innocent' texts and putting them through the distorting mangle of parody to accumulate dizzying layers of cultural references. However, while *Vic Reeves* is only about television, Clary's target is not just the game show genre, but the normative assumptions about sexuality on which it depends.

This is where the radical possibilities of the carnival re-enter the scene, since camp humour is quintessentially carnivalesque in its scandalous inversions of order and parodies of norms. *Sticky Moments* is a queer carnival where heterosexuality is held up to ridicule, while *Vic Reeves* is merely a set of knowing nods at the silliness of other texts.

Comedy is a huge field, and a single



Celia Johnson and Trevor Howard in 'Brief Encounter', a celebration of British virtues of ordinariness and muddling through

anthology is bound to suffer from disappointing omissions. Nevertheless, it is particularly baffling that *Comedy/Cinema/Theory* contains no reference at all to British comedy. A book which aspires, as this one does, to a broad canvas of comic analysis might have found room for a culture which has produced Gracie Fields, Alastair Sim, Noël Coward, *Fawlty Towers*, Ken Dodd, P. G. Wodehouse, *Passport to Pimlico*, Victoria Wood, *The Importance of Being Earnest* and the *Carry On* films. (It's in a *Carry On*, after all, that Peter Lehman might have come across a classic penis-size joke: a nurse wrestles the pyjamas from a patient reluctant to have a bed-bath, looks him up and down and says witheringly, "Such a big fuss over such a little thing".)

Horton's limp justification for the Hollywood-centredness of the collection is somewhat unconvincing: "The majority of the chapters concern American comedy because Hollywood has traditionally exerted a dominant influence on world film comedy". Such imperialism should be interrogated rather than asserted as fact. A token internationalism has, however, brought about the inclusion of two chapters on Eastern European comedy. This should greatly increase sales in Gdansk and Bucharest.

A study of Hollywood comedy that acknowledges and consequently thrives on its specific focus is Bruce Babington

and Peter Evans' *Affairs to Remember: The Hollywood Comedy of the Sexes*, first published two years ago and now issued in paperback. It manifests none of the timidity or wearisome displays of learning that undermine the Horton collection – which is not to say that it doesn't boast an impressive range of references. The difference is that they are productively woven into the textual analyses rather than waved as banners of intellectual credibility.

Babington and Evans' primary project is to challenge what they see as an undue stress placed by feminist and gay critics on the problems of heterosexuality. The Andrew Britton work quoted above is singled out as epitomising the kind of slanted, sniping critique that Babington and Evans want to overturn. The real subtitle of the book might have been *The Normals Strike Back* – though I'd be intrigued to know if Bruce and Peter have read Wayne Koestenbaum's provocative *Double Talk*, in which he suggests that men who write in pairs do so in order to displace or disavow homosexual desire...

The ideological mission of *Affairs to Remember* may be problematic, but this does not diminish the skill and resourcefulness with which the authors make their case. Indeed, they excel at sensitive, informed, detailed analysis – ironically enough, precisely the method employed by Britton. It's an unfashionably Leavisite

method – but in the positive sense of a criticism which values culture for what it discloses about the ideological contexts of its production.

Babington and Evans, like Britton before them, recognise that comedy is the repository of a society's most deeply felt convictions about normality and order. It's where our Others are most revealingly exposed – and comedy polices the terrain of sexual politics with particular vigilance. I'd contest most of Babington and Evans' critical judgments, but at present the field of comic analysis is still too full of the sterile, bloodless post-mortems that clog the pages of *Comedy/Cinema/Theory* for us to turn up our noses at a text as rich and fruitful as *Affairs to Remember*.

Home front heroine

Elizabeth Wilson

Celia Johnson: A Biography of a Celebrated Actress By Her Daughter
Kate Fleming, Weidenfeld and Nicholson,
£16.99, 244pp

A sticker on the cover announces that this biography has been "serialised on *Woman's Hour*". One feels that this surely must mean on a pre-feminist *Woman's Hour* ▶

◀ of the 40s or 50s, so firmly linked is Celia Johnson with the era when British womanhood was symbolised by cucumber sandwiches and hand-knitted jumpers (Jean Rook in her obituary of the actress compared her to both).

Biographer Kate Fleming is Celia Johnson's daughter, but this is no pious family memoir. It deals interestingly both with Johnson's family background and early life, and with the circumstances which led her to become the kind of actress she was. For example, in the 30s she chose to play in popular West End productions, mostly light comedies, rather than take the road of classical and Shakespearean acting that was followed by her contemporary, Peggy Ashcroft. This may have restricted her range, yet it opened the way for her subsequent collaboration with Noël Coward, which resulted in the successful wartime films, *In Which We Serve*, *This Happy Breed* and, above all, *Brief Encounter*. In these films Johnson is the embodiment of English wartime womanhood, the spirit of the Home Front.

Despite her passionate commitment to acting, Johnson appears to have been – particularly during the war – a character not unlike the heroine of *Brief Encounter*: an ordinary housewife, struggling with shortages, children, with the problem of nannies and housemaids being called up to do war work, and with the absence of a husband.

It was her class position rather than her career as a film and radio star that made her more than an ordinary housewife. Her husband, Peter Fleming, brother of Ian Fleming, was a writer and journalist and a wealthy landowner. Kate Fleming, coming from this background herself, describes it somewhat unanalytically.

Yet this 'taken for granted' quality of the upper middle class (or lower upper class) milieu – the stiff-upper-lip, understated culture of a class still supremely self-confident of its right to privilege – is the essence of the Celia Johnson image. One showed one's good breeding by never drawing attention to one's wealth, so the actress paid little attention to her appearance, with just the occasional "perm or Jaeger suit". She appears to have been genuinely unassuming, good fun and "one of the chaps".

This well-written book is an especially valuable source of material for those interested in the Second World War – the actress' letters from this period are full of fascinating detail about wartime daily life. It lacks, however, the detachment necessary to draw out the cultural links between British upper classness, patriotism and Johnson's particular brand of looks and style.

Far from being "timeless" as Kate Fleming suggests, *Brief Encounter* is of interest precisely because it is a film so much of its time. It captures a moment in British culture when our insularity, moral self-righteousness and middle-brow philistinism became virtues, transformed into the courage of endurance and the ability to survive by being ordinary and managing somehow to muddle through.

Shadow play

Michael O'Pray

The Shadow and its Shadow: Surrealist Writing on the Cinema

Paul Hammond (ed), Polygon, £8.95, 233pp

Unlike other major art movements of the twentieth century, surrealism seems always to be with us – in advertising, for example. It does, however, go in and out of fashion; at present it is enjoying a high profile thanks to certain forms of post-modernism and to the work of film-makers like David Lynch (a pseudo-surrealist), Jan Švankmajer (a true one) and Peter Greenaway (a peculiarly English hybrid).

For this reason, Paul Hammond's revised edition of his classic collection, first published by the British Film Institute in 1978, may receive a more sympa-

thetic welcome than it did in the late 70s, when surrealism was neglected by *Screen* theory and formalism held sway in the avant-garde. But Hammond's book also reminds us that surrealism is not simply a matter of style. Consequently, his list of films made by surrealists is still unnervingly and soberingly short (only the Czech animators Jan Švankmajer and Ludvík Šváb have been added to the 1977 edition). Given the hard line adopted, it is not surprising that neither Lynch nor Greenaway is mentioned.

Hammond has supplied a new introduction and eight more essays. His original introduction was appropriately defensive and snarling about the avant-garde (Maya Deren, Stan Brakhage and Kenneth Anger incurred his wrath). The new one is more relaxed and personal in tone. It also demands to be seen as a surrealist text in its own right. A major shift can be detected in the explicit linking

Salvador Dalí, whose artistic reputation suffered from his self-mythologising and dubious political sympathies



of surrealism with nineteenth-century Romanticism, keeping the ghost of André Breton at arm's length. The eight new essays include pieces by Salvador Dalí, Gérard Legrand, The Surrealist Group (a fascinating defence, written in 1927, of Chaplin's highly publicised marital problems), Robert Benayoun and Alain Joubert.

Surrealist writing on the cinema has always been most effective at the level of a film's latent content. However, many of the pieces in this collection suggest the importance of the physical activity of watching movies, an aspect of cinema generally neglected by contemporary theory on the grounds of subjectivism (Jonathan Rosenbaum's book *Moving Places* is a recent antidote to this view). Surrealism, as Hammond understands it (supported by Buñuel, Benayoun, Král and others), is a creative enterprise shaped by the dialectic between audience (not the abstract spectators of theory) and film.

Among the additions, Dalí's 1932 essay is truly exciting, revealing an underrated critic and theorist. Petr Král's piece on silent comic Larry Semon, taking in *en passant* Chaplin and the Marx Brothers, is a model of surrealist fervour and Freudian pseudo-analysis. The feminist dilemma in relation to surrealism is not mentioned; however, an essay by Nelly Kaplan celebrates the release of eroticism and desire which preoccupies her own work and has been taken on board by the likes of Ulrike Ottinger, Elfi Mikesch and Jayne Parker.

Hammond's book is a reminder of the wealth and range of surrealist writings on the cinema. Plucked from two major periods – the original movement of the 20s and 30s and the French resurgence in the early 50s around Adou Kyrout and Benayoun's journal *L'Age du cinéma* – the work represented here is still challenging and genuinely eccentric, locating itself in an 'ethic' of love, reverie and revolt. Hammond has wisely resisted critical work on surrealism and remained faithful to the writings of surrealists. The book's strength lies in allowing the authentic surrealist voice to dominate, thus revealing how important a part it played in what was actually said.

Imitations of white

Patrice Petro

Imitation of Life: Douglas Sirk, Director
Lucy Fischer (ed), Rutgers University Press, \$14, 346pp

This newest edition of the *Rutgers Films in Print* series collects an array of materials (contemporary reviews, critical essays, interviews, excerpts from the literary source and a complete continuity script) in a reconsideration of *Imitation of Life* (1958), one of Douglas Sirk's most compelling melodramas and a key work for film studies. In her introduction, Lucy Fischer notes that although *Imitation of Life* was rarely taken up by 70s film scholarship, it resurfaced in the 80s "like an academic



The blonde star as 50s ideal of white femininity: Lana Turner in Sirk's 'Imitation of Life'

idée fixe". This "compensatory preoccupation", Fischer argues, can be traced to genre studies and ideological criticism, which forced a reappraisal of a film that explored "the intersection of numerous powerful cultural forces that define the postwar era and the place of the cinema within it".

Fischer says little more about shifts in critical assessments of the film. Instead, she briefly summarises the contextual forces (the history of women and work, race relations and star mythology) that influenced its production and initial reception. Nevertheless, the collection itself provides palpable evidence of both the difficulties and the stakes involved in identifying the film's historical significance. Is it a woman's film or an auteurist, avant-garde-inflected exercise in style? Is its depiction of gender and race progressive or reactionary? To whom is it addressed, women or intellectuals? (The opposition, of course, excludes the possibility of intellectual women, who constitute the majority of commentators in the 80s.)

Paul Willemen's essays on Sirk, published in the 70s and reprinted here, set the terms of analysis for at least a decade. Sirk's *oeuvre*, Willemen contended, combines stylistic excess and the conventions of "women's weeklies"; hence the "discrepancy between the audience Sirk is aiming at and the audience which he knows will come to see his films". This perceived discrepancy between a female audience absorbed in melodrama and an intellectual audience distanced by the male auteur's parody of the woman's film unwittingly promoted masculinist assumptions. According to Willemen, the preferred spectator in Sirk "not only sees his wishes fulfilled, but he sees them criticised and is thus forced to perceive himself as object, rather than subject".

Feminist scholars challenged this premise and insisted on the importance of genres addressed to women, who had long been forced to perceive themselves as objects in the Hollywood film. Early feminist criticism rarely mentions *Imitation of Life*, tending to favour films like King Vidor's *Stella Dallas* and Hitchcock's *Rebecca*.

It was only in the mid-80s, with pressures to consider racial as well as sexual differences, that *Imitation of Life* emerged as a key feminist text. The essays by Jeremy Butler, Marina Heung and Sandy Flitterman-Lewis included here illustrate the distance travelled between 70s ideological critique and 80s feminist revisionism.

Flitterman-Lewis' essay offers by far the most satisfying interpretation of the film. She explores how *Imitation of Life* consciously sets up ideals of race and gender which have no authentic origin. The extreme stylisation of the blonde Lora (Lana Turner) as feminine icon is clearly linked to the oppressiveness of 'whiteness' as a compulsory ideal of desirability. Hence Sarah Jane's revolt – her rejection of her 'blackness' through self-conscious mimicry – ironically means that she must assume this dominant definition, that she must vainly and persistently perform an imitation of white (itself revealed as performance). By linking stylistic excess (a 70s concern) to the construction of racial and sexual difference (an 80s concern), Flitterman-Lewis provides a fitting conclusion to the story of the changing critical reception of a remarkable film.

Whose war?

Sue Harper

Blackout: Reinventing Women for Wartime British Cinema

Antonia Lant, Princeton University Press, £11.95, 262pp

Blackout looks at gender stereotyping in films made during the Second World War, drawing parallels between movies and other cultural forms, and between different movies. For example, Lant traces the way blindness, male mastery of the skies, phallic symbolism and family networks recur as unifying metaphors across disparate media. And she provides an intriguing analysis of the use of the blackout to symbolise "both probity and prudence" within and outside film texts. The book includes some cogent textual analyses, notably of *Brief Encounter* (1945). Yet in spite of their admirable attention to visual detail, these adopt a basically reflectionalist approach to the relationship between films and social history.

A predictable parade of theoreticians (Bakhtin, Jameson, Barthes, Pasolini, Kristeva, Metz, Baudry, Macherey, Benveniste and Terry Eagleton) is marshalled in an attempt to cast light on historical problems. But attention might more usefully have been paid to distribution patterns or the propaganda battle to overcome American neutrality. Lant's approach is symptomatic of a current crisis in feminist film criticism, brought about by the failure of theory to deliver the goods when it comes to cultural analysis. Some historians have turned to more empirical methods, while struggling to avoid the limitations of empiricism.

Lant links films by theme and date rather than studio or director, which means that film history is presented as ►

◀ a linear development. A more comprehensive map of popular film might have been drawn using the notion of 'production authorship' to contrast different studio aesthetics and audience appeal. And while Lant makes suggestive comments about the importance of some popular films to women, their broader production context is often ignored. Moreover, her assertion that wartime films with a modern setting have "more to say, particularly for feminism" than costume films needs to be substantiated.

A more serious problem is the book's source material. Lant looks at contemporary journalism, advertisements, Mass Observation reports and posters to compare them with the content of the films. But it is not unreasonable to expect, in a study of conflicting official and cinematic discourses, first-hand scrutiny of propaganda material from the Ministry of Information, or at least some reference to the work of the Ideas Committee. The book is also weak on official film policy and there are no Public Records Office references at all, except those quoted in Marian Yass' *This Is Your War*. No Board of Trade memos have been scrutinised – instead, Norman Longmate's insights in *How We Lived Then* are used to provide evidence of everyday life. Quotes from parliamentary debates are taken from Margaret Dickinson and Sarah Street's *Cinema and State*, while references to material from an unpublished PhD and the Fawcett Library are derived from *The Guardian* and *The Times Literary Supplement* respectively.

Many of Lant's ideas are obscured by a style resistant to readerly comfort. The language of geometry, its grids, intersections and axes, keeps company with the fetishes and specularities of psychoanalysis. *Blackout* presents itself as (to use its own terms) a "limit text" – a radical, groundbreaking work. But expressions like "defang", "lyses", "embrangled" and "connptions" do little to help its case.

Porn again

Suzanne Moore

Pornography and Feminism: The Case Against Censorship

Gillian Rodgeron and Elizabeth Wilson (eds), Lawrence and Wishart, £4.99, 79pp

Watching Andrea Dworkin, that travelling evangelist, in a recent *Omnibus* documentary, it was difficult not to be swept along by her passionate commitment to banning pornography. We don't, she argued, have the luxury of debating the issues of censorship and free speech because in the time it takes to do so, flesh and blood women will be murdered as a direct result of the pornography industry. However, when political debate over censorship is considered a luxury rather than a necessity, one needs to question what kind of politics is being endorsed.

It is particularly sad that glorified gut reaction should be turned not just into dogma, but into evidence of a true faith in feminism. This, however, is the case on

both sides of the Atlantic. It takes real guts to stand up against Dworkin and Mackinnon, the Campaign Against Pornography, the Mary Whitehouse lobby and the newly respectable Labour Party (Dawn Primarolo's Location of Pornographic Materials bill will also affect gay pornography) and say, wait a minute... I am as feminist as the next woman and the last thing I want is more state censorship.

Pornography and Feminism, produced by Feminists Against Censorship, makes just this case. In contrast to the fundamentalist fervour of Dworkin and her mob, it states its arguments clearly and calmly, dismantling with ease many of the myths of the anti-porn brigade. It is made clear from the outset that pornography is not condoned, but is seen as an extension of the way women are portrayed across a range of genres, from *Vogue* magazine to Renaissance painting.

Seeing porn as part of a continuum of problematic imagery means that the Final Solution proposed by Dworkin and her unlikely bedfellows, the Moral Right, is impossible. What is more, Rodgeron and Wilson acknowledge that pornography, in Angela Carter's phrase, can be put to "the service of women". To conceive of women as passive victims plays into the hands of Victorian ideologies about innate differences between the sexes, and prevents the subject of female sexual pleasure from being raised.

More pragmatically, however, *Pornography and Feminism* points out that the discussion cannot be framed, as it so often is, in terms of whether there should be censorship or not. Massive censorship already exists and the legislation of the 80s (the 1981 Indecent Displays Act, the 1982 Local Government Act, the 1984 Video Recordings Act), as well as the notorious Clause 28, means that our access to images is gradually being curtailed. The authors go on to demonstrate how legislation proposed by feminist campaigners, which draws parallels between incitement to sexual hatred and incitement to racial hatred, would be unworkable, since the relationship between sexual imagery and images of racial hatred is far more contradictory than is allowed.

The authors make mincemeat of the anti-porn campaigners' "theories", which they describe as a lethal "cocktail of biology and behaviourism". It is ironic that the Campaign Against Pornography resorts to ideas which historically have been the least progressive for women, and that it chooses to ignore the insights of psychoanalysis and media studies in favour of an analysis that reduces men to drooling sub-Pavlovian creatures.

The book also nicely points up the way the porn industry's paternalism is mirrored by the paternalism of the censors who would save us from it. Women are whores in one scenario, virgins who need to be protected in the other; neither side is interested in empowering them. *Pornography and Feminism* charts a third route, one that acknowledges that women have bodies and minds, and the right to choose what to do with both.

Shorts

Donald Brittain:

Never the Ordinary Way

William Weintraub et al, The National Film Board of Canada, \$17.95, 107pp

● A collection of articles to commemorate the work of Canadian documentary film-maker and virtuoso poker player Donald Brittain, who died in 1989. Articles on 'The Man' and 'The Film-maker' are accompanied by commentaries on the best-known films, and a filmography and bibliography are also included.

The Aurum Film Encyclopaedias: Vol.1 The Western; Vol.2 Science Fiction

Phil Hardy (ed), Aurum Press, £30 each, (Vol.1) 416pp, (Vol.2) 478pp

● Completely revised and updated editions of these classic reference books. Both include lengthy introductions tracing each genre's development. *The Western* features more than 1,800 films from the earliest talkies to *Dances With Wolves*, while *Science Fiction* lists over 1,450 movies from the pioneering efforts of Georges Méliès to *Akira*, *RoboCop* and beyond.

Postmodern Theory:

Critical Interrogations

Steven Best and Douglas Kellner, Macmillan Education, £10.99, 324pp

● Best and Kellner go gunning for postmodernism, surveying the work of doyens Foucault, Deleuze, Baudrillard, Lyotard and Jameson. Laying the blame for the 'postmodern frenzy' at the door of the conservative and cynical 80s, the authors argue the need for a new theoretical constellation in which the best of post-modernist ideas can work productively with and against more comprehensive economic and political macro-theories.

American Picture Palaces:

The Architecture of Fantasy

David Naylor, Prentice Hall, £14.99, 224pp

● First published in 1981, this lavishly illustrated new edition celebrates the dramatic facades and sumptuous interiors of the US picture palaces from Grauman's Chinese in Hollywood to New York's Radio City Music Hall. Naylor enthuses about the exotic excesses of these extraordinary structures, which displayed a blatant mish-mash of styles in an attempt to seduce pleasure-seeking patrons into the fantasy world of cinema.

A Twentieth Century Job

G. Cabrera Infante, translated by Kenneth Hall and the author, Faber and Faber, £17.50, 371pp

● The Cuban novelist's writings on cinema for the magazine *Carteles* and the newspaper *Revolución* between 1954 and 1960. Under the pseudonym G. Cain, Cabrera Infante expounded wittily and with erudition on movies from *The Red Shoes* to *Vertigo*, while providing playful commentaries on the business of criticism itself.

Osgood and Anthony Perkins

Laura Kay Palmer, McFarland and Co, £33.75, 411pp

● A comprehensive history of the careers of father and son in theatre, film and other media. The book includes complete bio-filmographies with commentaries and credits for every play, film, radio and TV programme in which each appeared, plus a selected bibliography.

In the name of the mother

In the opening sequence of Bertolucci's *La Luna*, a classic Freudian primal scene is enacted in tableau. On a bright terrace by the sea, a naked baby boy is fed honey on his mother's finger, and chokes. Later he looks up to see his mother (Jill Clayburgh) violently doing the twist with a shadowy man who is holding a knife in one hand and a gutted fish in the other. The baby bursts into tears, and tangled up in a skein of white knitting wool, he totters in out of the sun to find his grandmother. The film's credits appear over a scene of the mother slowly bicycling at night, the baby in a basket facing her, watching the full moon appearing and disappearing behind her face. At one point she feels the baby's nappy, then rubs her fingers gently together, sensing the dampness.

Later in the film, Joe is now fourteen and addicted to heroin. His (apparent) father dead, Joe has taken his place, accompanying his mother, a famous opera singer, from New York to Rome. There heroin, in another displacement, stands in for his attachment to his mother, the syringe substituting for the breast. When Joe (Matthew Barry) becomes ill, in the sequence of excess and withdrawal, too much and not enough, that so perfectly recapitulates the infant's struggle with the mother for food, his mother comforts him with the real thing. (Without the father to guarantee the incest taboo with his name, his authority, his law, anything is possible.) Caterina gives Joe her breast to suck, and masturbates him through his velvet trousers until he comes with a sigh. It is then the tiny gesture is repeated: she gently rubs her fingers together, again her baby boy is wet.

It is this specificity and delicacy of detail that makes *La Luna* so thrilling to me. In a way it's a very literary film, jam-packed with signification, each scene overdetermined and inviting interpretation. At the same time the film is wildly over the top, loud, lurid, spectacular, occasionally almost comic in its lack of inhibition. It is a melodrama, depicting a set of symbolic relationships, encased in an intricate web of realistic detail. *La Luna* (made in 1978) was so contemporary as to predict, in its treatment of heroin, opera, and psychoanalysis, not only the fashions but also the obsessions of the 80s. Yet realist notions of 'character' are eschewed, the central figures are larger than life, and they enact an Oedipal drama, a narrative sequence whose inevitability and momentum are lifted straight out of Freud.

On one level, the film is an exploration of the validity of the incest taboo. Caterina and Joe try, but fail at incest. Stopping the car at a railway crossing near Parma, she says, "this is where your father first kissed me". Joe kisses her, passionately. Later, when he proves incapable of actually fucking her (despite or because of her increasingly frantic desire), shrieking "you're

With its delicacy of detail and lack of inhibition, Bertolucci's 'La Luna' is an extraordinary study, not simply of father and son, but of maternal desire, says novelist Leslie Dick

sick!" and going into the next room to shoot up, Caterina, after an initial extraordinary moment of panicked *interruptus*, finally reveals her secret. The dead father was not Joe's real father.

In the final sequence, which takes place at a rehearsal of Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera* in the Roman baths of Caracalla, all is revealed, permitting an end to concealment, displacement and substitution. Yet resolution is possible only because when he meets his true father, Joe provokes him, he elicits punishment. Joe tells Giuseppe (note the 'name of the father') that his son is dead, has overdosed in the street; when Giuseppe subsequently understands the lie, he hits Joe hard across the face. It's painful; holding his jaw, Joe is shocked into a tearful satisfaction, smiling and crying at the same time.

Thus the moment of paternal recognition is a moment of punishment, though Bertolucci is careful to sidestep actual reconciliation, showing the father and son in separate shots, grinning as they watch the spectacle of femininity, Caterina, in action, on stage, belting out Verdi. Nevertheless, the law of the father is reconfirmed. At last Joe can take his place in the world, no longer locked into the perilous pleasures of infantile attachment.

Nineteenth-century Italian opera is a culmination of the melodrama, and *La Luna* is operatic in structure, using formal devices of parody, counterpoint and rhythm to work against a realist reading. Joe trails around Rome, tracing a white chalk line on walls as he walks (cf. the white wool of the opening scene), as if hoping someone will follow, and find him. (Joe's junky girlfriend's name is Arianna, Ariadne in Italian.) When he wanders into a bar, half picked up by Pasolini's actor, Franco Citti, Joe does a solitary disco dance to 'Night Fever' on the juke box, while licking an ice-cream cone. The spectacle is breathtaking, his sloppy move-

ments and the tacky, compelling music an ironic parallel to the grandiose formal illusion of Caterina on stage. When Citti embraces him, Joe mutters, "I'm looking for someone". Finding his father, he finds out what he's been looking for: not so much 'Daddy', as an end to deception.

When *La Luna* opened, the performance of Jill Clayburgh proved disconcerting to almost everyone. Her abandon seemed embarrassing, as was her wide open mouth, unbelievably emitting terrific arias. Caterina's relentless narcissism, compulsive flirtatiousness, endlessly drawing attention to herself, was appalling, a terrifying parody of femininity. Yet the anti-realism of the undeniable dub (cross-referenced by a glimpse of Marilyn Monroe in *Niagara*, speaking Italian) still seems sophisticated, while Clayburgh's acting is both controlled and courageous. What perhaps was more problematic than now was the emphatic presentation of femininity as masquerade, as if the prima donna, ultra-feminine, ultra-maternal, is always and inevitably a performance, like the moon, shining with reflected light, yet hiding a dark face, another side.

Maybe the real problem with the film was the melodrama of psychoanalysis itself, provoking a squeamish distaste in people who'd prefer not to think about maternal desire. In Bertolucci's acceptance speech at the Academy Awards in 1989, when *The Last Emperor* (epic rather than melodrama, interestingly) swept the Oscars, he said: "New York is often described as the Big Apple. Tonight, for me, Hollywood is the Big Nipple". Hollywood was aghast, Bertolucci perplexed: surely they've all read Freud, he said, they're American. It was another case of misrecognition, yet, following the association of the maternal breast and heroin use played out in *La Luna*, perhaps this speech can also be seen as Bertolucci's confession that for him, Hollywood is an addiction.



Jill Clayburgh, the mother, whose courageous performance disconcerted almost everyone

Reviews

Reviews, synopses and full credits for all the month's new films and new British TV films

The Addams Family

Certificate
PG
Distributor
Columbia Tri-Star
Production Companies
Paramount Pictures/
Orion Pictures
Executive Producer
Graham Place
Producer
Scott Rudin
Co-producer
Jack Cummins
Associate Producers
Bonnie Arnold
Paul Rosenberg
Production Co-ordinator
Sharon Morov
Unit Production Manager
Jack Cummins
Location Managers
Antoinette Levine
John Panzarella
Casting
David Rubin
Associate:
Debra Zane
Extras:
Charlie Messenger
Voice:
Barbara Harris
Assistant Directors
Joe Camp III
Ian Foster Woolf
Joseph Brad Kluge
Michael Ryan Baxter
Zia Iampietro
Screenplay
Caroline Thompson
Larry Wilson
Based on the characters created by Charles Addams
Director of Photography
Owen Roizman
Colour
DeLuxe
Additional Photography
Gale Tattersall
Camera Operators
Rob Hahn
Todd Henry
Robert La Bonge
Chris Squires
Special Visual Effects Supervisors
Alan Munro
Chuck Comisky
Visual Effects Unit
Directors of Photography:
Chris Nibley
Bill Pope
Bert Dunk
Jim Auperrel
Optical Composites:
Visual Concepts
Engineering
Pete Kuran
Animation Effects:
Kevin Kutchaver
Al Mag
Pam Vick
Photographic Effects:
Paul Gentry
Bill Conner
Gary George
Editorial:
Jo Martin
Tracy Singleton
Optical Effects
Line-up:
Dave Emerson
Brian Griffin
Tim Segulin
George Lockwood
Optical Printing:
Todd Hall
Rick Hannigan
David Tucker
Gary Martin
Administration:
Jacqueline Zietlow
Marilyn Nave
Primary Production
Illustrator:
Mentor Huebner
Storyboards:
Ron Harris
Co-ordinator:
Jessica Huebner
Special Make-up:
Louis Lazzara



Just like innocence: Christopher Lloyd, Anjelica Huston

Special Prosthetics and Mechanical Devices:
Alterian Studios
Tony Gardner
"Thing" Prosthetics and Puppets:
David Miller Studio
David Miller
Model Train Crash:
Ron Thornton Effects
Matte Art/Composites:
Illusion Arts
Bill Taylor
Syd Dutton
Production Assistants:
Thomas Burke
Fred E. O. Toye
Rich Schaff
Editors
Dede Allen
Jim Miller
Production Designer
Richard MacDonald
Art Director
Marjorie Stone
McShirley
Set Designers
Nancy Mickelberry
Beverly Eagan
Lawrence Hubbs
Set Decorator
Cheryl Kearney
Set Dressers
Tamara Clinard
Randy Bostic
Steven C. Husch
Scenic Artists
John Stewart
Ronald Gress
Storyboard Artist
J. Todd Anderson
Special Effects Co-ordinator
Chuck Gaspar
Special Effects
Mike Edmondson
Peter H. Albiez
Music
Marc Shaiman
Music Arrangements
Dance:
Peter Golub
Orchestrations
Mark McKenzie
Additional:
Steve Bartek
Ralph Burns
Dennis Dreith
Jack Eskew
Thom Sharp
Music Producers
Marc Shaiman
Hummie Mann
Music Editor
George A. Martin

Songs
"Addams Groove"
(includes "The Addams Family Theme" by Vic Mizzy)
by Hammer, Pilate;
"Too Legit to Quit"
by Hammer, Pilate,
Kelly, Burrell; "This Is the Way We Roll"
by Hammer, Pilate;
"Burn It Up" by Hammer, Pilate
performed by Hammer; "The Addams Family Theme" by Vic Mizzy;
"Mamushka" by Marc Shaiman, Betty Comden, Adolph Green; "Carol of the Bells" by M. Leontovich,
Peter J. Wilhousky; "Deck the Halls" (arrangement), "The Fa-La-La Song" by Nick D'Amico, performed by The Caroling Company;
"Playmates" by Saxie Dowell, performed by The Kipper Kids; "O Sole Mio" by Edoardo Di Capua, Giovanni Capurro, Alfredo Mazzucchi, performed by Beniamino Gigli; "The Mooche" by Duke Ellington, Irving Mills; "Getting to Know You" by Richard Rodgers, Oscar Hammerstein II; "La Folia" arranged and performed by Carole Koenig; "Sally Jessy Raphael" by Dan Radlauer
Choreography
Peter Anastos
Fencing:
B. H. Barry
Costume Design
Ruth Myers
Wardrobe
Supervisor:
Linda A. Matthews
Linda Henrikson
Mitchell Kenney
Robin Borman
Murray Lantz
Bill Campbell
Make-up
Design:
Fern Buchner
Artists:
Katherine James
Kevin C. Haney
Title Design
Pablo Ferro
Allen Ferro
Titles/Opticals
Cinema Research Corporation

Supervising Sound Editors
Cecelia Hall
Gary Wright
Sound Editors
Dialogue:
Bob O'Brien
Constance A. Kazmer
Alison Fisher
Gloria D'Alessandro
Supervising ADR Editor
Juno J. Ellis
ADR Editors
Denise Horta
Nicholas V. Korda
Supervising Foley Editor
Pamela Bentkowsky
Foley Editors
Christine Danelski
Fred Burke
Sound Recordists
Peter F. Kurland
ADR:
Bob Baron
Mark "Frito" Long
Music:
Tim Boyle
Dolby stereo
Consultant:
Steve F. B. Smith
Sound Re-recordists
Gregg Landaker
Gary Summers
Michael Minkler
Foley:
Greg Curda
James Ashwill
Sound Effects Editors
Joseph A. Ippolito
Trevor Jolly
Howell Gibbens
Marshall Winn
Beth Sterner
John Benson
Steve Mann
Additional Sound Effects Created by
John P. Fasal
John Pospisil
Frank Serafine
Foley Artists
Ken Dufva
David Lee Fein
Kevin Bartnof
John Roesch
Consultant
The Lady Colyton
Production Assistants
Key:
Brian W. Jochum
Stunt Co-ordinator
David Ellis
Stunts
Randy Korvitz
Keith Campbell
Mary Peters
Danny Rogers
David Welch

Cast
Anjelica Huston
Morticia Addams
Raul Julia
Gomez Addams
Christopher Lloyd
Gordon
Dan Hedaya
Tully Alford
Elizabeth Wilson
Abigail Craven
Judith Malina
Granny
Carel Struycken
Lurch
Dana Ivey
Margaret Alford
Paul Benedict
Judge Womack
Christina Ricci
Wednesday Addams
Jimmy Workman
Pugsley Addams
Christopher Hart
Thing
John Franklin
Cousin It
Tony Azito
Digit Addams
Douglas Brian Martin
Dexter Addams
Steven M. Martin
Donald Addams
Allegra Kent
Cousin Ophelia Addams
Richard Korthaze
Slosh Addams
Ryan Holihan
Lumpy Addams
Maureen Sue Levin
Flora Amor
Darlene Levin
Fauna Amor
Kate McGregor-Stewart
Employment Agent
Lela Ivey
Susan Firkins
Whitby Hertford
Little Tully
Patty Maloney
Lois Addams
Victoria Hall
Swedish Blonde
Jimmy Ross
Pre-teen Gomez
Ryan Anderson
Pre-teen Fester
Daniel Pikus
Teenage Gomez
Michael Hittesdorf
Teenage Fester
Lauren Walker
Teenage Flora
Valeri Walker
Teenage Fauna
Mercedes McNab
Girl Scout
Joe Simmerman
Long Arm Addams
Steve Welles
Fingers Addams
Eugene Jackson
One-armed Bass Player
Richard Tanner
Snake Charmer
Marc Shaiman
Conductor
The Passing Zone
Jonathan Wee
Owen Morse
Jugglers
J. Eustermann
Eric Fiedler
Bruce Fuller
Jim McPherson
Dianna Smith
William Sturgeon
Tommy Williamson
Jnr
John Robles
David Penikas
Puppeteers
Special appearance by
Sally Jessy Raphael

8,955 feet
99 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Barry Sonnenfeld

Twenty-five years ago, Fester Addams quarrelled with his younger brother Gomez, feeling the latter had alienated the affections of his Siamese twin girlfriends Flora and Fauna, and disappeared at sea. Gomez is now happily married to Morticia, with children Wednesday and Pugsley, faithful servants Thing and Lurch, and mother-in-law also in residence at the dilapidated Addams mansion. But once a year, he holds a seance in an attempt to contact the vanished Fester.

Tully, the crooked Addams lawyer, is scheming with Abigail Craven to take over the Addams estate, with its fabulous treasures, and they resolve to pass off Abigail's son Gordon as Fester. Gordon arrives during the seance, claiming to have been lost in the Bermuda Triangle, and is joyously accepted by Gomez, although Wednesday is suspicious of him. Surrounded by the bizarre but supportive family, Gordon begins to regret his treachery, and takes an interest in the children, helping Wednesday and Pugsley to appal their school with an incredibly gory Shakespeare extract at a class play.

The Addams family hosts a ball to celebrate Fester's homecoming, uniting all their strange relatives – including Cousin It, who takes a shine to Tully's wife Margaret – and, while dancing the celebratory Mamushka, Gordon comes to believe that he might really be Fester. However, Tully and Abigail get a court order to exclude the Addams family from their own home; then, with an unhappy Gordon, they set about searching for the treasure.

Trying to make it in the real world, the family variously seek employment. Morticia returns to plead with 'Fester', and is captured and tortured by Tully and Abigail. Thing, a disembodied hand, rushes across town and brings Gomez to rescue his wife, and the villains are defeated. With Gordon accepted as the real Fester, life in the Addams family continues as normal.

The Addams Family opens with the eponymous ghouls preparing to pour boiling oil on an unbearably merry group of carol singers, in duplication of one of the most famous of Charles Addams' New Yorker cartoons. But the image is overlaid with a snatch of Vic Mizzy's finger-snapping original Addams Family television theme mixed into Marc Shaiman's effective score, thus signalling the fusion of approaches which Barry Sonnenfeld has brought to his material. Slightly embarrassed by its origins in something as *declassé* as a 60s sit-com – and perhaps well aware of such scrappy old-TV-to-new-

film precedents as *Dragnet*, *The Nude Bomb* (from *Get Smart*) or *Twilight Zone the Movie* – Sonnenfeld has claimed in interviews that he never cared much for the 1964/66 show, even expressing a preference for the rival *Munsters*, and that he tried to base this film more on the style of the singleton cartoons.

In the event, however, the film's occasional pauses for a knitted three-legged baby suit or a one-eyed halloween lantern prove to be among the least amusing moments in what is generally a successful reprise of the bizarre tone of the television series, which really did the spadework of transforming Addams' nameless characters into the stuff of storylines. Indeed, in its attempts to include all the well-remembered features of the old show with the added benefits of screen technology, freeing Thing from his box to make a severed hand one of the most active and likeable characters in the film, the movie tries to cram in too much. Several of the characters – most notably Lurch and Granny – barely get a look-in, as if they were being saved for later episodes.

Stuck with an actual plot as ephemeral as that of *Munster Go Home* or (indeed) the TV special *Halloween with the Addams Family*, *The Addams Family* still manages very affectingly to transfer from series to film both the basic joke, that pure decadence can be touchingly like innocence, and the subtly subversive notion that Morticia and Gomez (unlike Lucy and Desi, Ward and June Cleaver, even Darrin and Samantha) have an intensely sexual marriage, which is the secret of their disturbing rebellion against the milk-and-water normality expected of sit-com couples.

The Addams family itself goes beyond simple family ties with the final acceptance of Gordon as Fester, whether he actually is or not, predicated simply on his willingness to enter into their life style. The film works as a celebration of unconventional togetherness thanks mainly to a collection of casting coups, with the single odd choice paying off as Christopher Lloyd's struggle between his own manic image and the distinctive Fester likeness becomes part of the plot. Anjelica Huston and Raul Julia develop the performances of Carolyn Jones and John Astin without being hamstrung by old schtick, while especial mention should be made of magician Christopher Hart, who manages to make his hand express an extraordinarily wide range, and Christina Ricci as blank-faced Wednesday, strapping her brother into an electric chair and informing him, as she throws the switches, that this game is called "Is there a God?"

Kim Newman

An American Tail: Fievel Goes West



Reviving classic roles...

Certificate

U

Distributor

UIP

Production Company

Amblin

Executive Producers

Frank Marshall

Kathleen Kennedy

David Kirschner

Producers

Steven Spielberg

Robert Watts

Associate Producer

Stephen Hickner

Production

Executive

Deborah Newmyer

Production

Controller

Amblin

Bonne Radford

Production

Co-ordinator

Joe McCaffrey

Production Manager

Collin J. Alexander

Post-production

Supervisor

Martin Cohen

Post-production

Co-ordinator

Bradley Goodman

Post-production

Associate

Michelle Fandetti

Casting

Nancy Naylor

Valerie McCaffrey

ADR Voice:

Mickie McGowan

Screenplay

Flint Dille

Story

Charles Swenson

Camera Operators

Robert Crawford

(Supervisor)

Stuart Campbell

Tim Francis

Graham Tiernan

Kevan Wooldridge

Brian Riley

Stuart Holloway

Barry Newton

Russell Tagg

In colour

Animation Executive

Thad Wienlein

Supervising

Animators

Nancy Beiman

Kristof Serrand

Rob Stevenhagen

Animators

Bibo E. Bergeron

Thierry Schiel

Raul Garcia

Pete Western

Ceu D'Elia

David Bowers

Phil Morris

Piet Kroon

Patrick Mate

Glen Sylvester

Rodolphe Guenoden

Luc Chamberland

Roy Meurin

Jürgen Richter

Greg Manwaring

Shane Doyle

Daniel Jeanette

Eric Bouillette

Andreas Von Andrian

Jan Van Buyten

Ute Von Munchow-

Pohl

Denis Couchon

Paul Macdonald

Alain Maindron

Additional:

Oliver Pont

Quentin Miles

Georges Abolin

Fabio Lignini

Wolf-Ruediger Bloss

Miguel Fuertes

Mark Wolfgang

Broeking

Angelos Rouvas

Jean Pilotte

Joe McCaffrey

Effects Animators

Jon Brooks

Steve Burch

Ed Coffey

Mike Smith

Brice Mallier

Paul Van Geyt

Al Holter

Brad Clark

Glenn Chaika

Alex Stadernan

Hock Lian Law

Vito Lo Russo

Checking Supervisor

Frances Jacob

Animation Checkers

Joan Topley

Lucie Belanger

David Allonby

Corine Marcel

Tuula Milz

Layout Supervisor

Mark Marren

Layout Artists

Brendan Houghton

Armen Melkonian

Pana Giotis Rappas

Giorgio Mardegan

Tom Humber

Marco Cinello

Antonio Navarro

Background

Supervisor

Shelley Page

Background Artists

Gary Sycamore

Rachel Stedman

Sean Eckett

Walter Koessler

Derek Gogol

Mike Rose

Ennio Torresan Jnr

Daniel Cacoualt

Colin Stimpson

David Womersley

Paint and Trace

Supervisor:

Corona Esterhazy

Overseas Supervisor:

Jane Gotts

Co-ordinator:

Matthew Teevan

Paint Mixer:

Karin Adams

Tracers

Patrick Beirne

Peter Hynes

Leanne Rich

Marcus Rich

Julie Gleeson

Vanessa Martin

Bethlem Cerqueira

Painters

Brendan Amphlett

Julia Bracegirdle

Helen Buckingham

Graham Chenery

Denise Coates

Jane Dillon

Declan English

Alison Haines

Jason Hewitt

Sally Hobson

Ben Horner

Sandra Kemp

Susan Lamson

Derek Lestrangle

Shaun McGlinchey

Tanya Morton

Tim Nuttall

Michael O'Neil

Sandra O'Neil

Carmen Parrinello

Glenn Stevens

Daniel Thomas

Lee Townsend

Airbrush Artists

Christian Schmidt

Laurent Ben-Mimoun

Final Checkers

Jill Tudor

Steve Pegram

Chantel Marsolais

Michelle Povey

Marianne Rousseau

Helen O'Brien

Inbetweeners

Cecile Bender

Shaun Blake

Jamie Bolio

Bram Calcoen

Stephen Cavalier

Juan Cecilia

David Clarvis

Denise Dean

Heather Doyle

Gavin Emerson

Stuart Evans

Susan Goldberg

Darren Goodacre

Anthony Gray

Nina Haley

Paul Hallowell

Debbie Hamed

Nicholas Harrop

Mark Hessler

Janette Hynes

Lawrence Keogh

Sarah Keogh

Veronique Langdon

Alex Lawrence

Roger Lougher

Michaela Muller

David Navarro

Reviews

The Addams Family
An American Tail: Fievel Goes West

Andy Paraskos
Dawn Pearce
Jane Poole
Maria Jesus Rubio
Kay Sales
Christopher Shaw
Jason Shipley
Mark Smith
Kevin Spruce
John Sweeney
Simon Swift
Lee Taylor
Matthew Taylor
Marco Trandafilov
David Webster
Tim White

Effects
Inbetweeners
Guner Behich
Michaela Budde
Duncan Henry
John O'Neill
Albert Price
Richard Tang
Stephen McDermott

Xerox Supervisor
Sandy Gordon

Xerox
Shaun Caton
Sarah McLoughlin
Harry R. C. Elvin
Adam Binham

Colour Models
Alison Flintham
Sarah Fletcher

Team Leaders
Sarah Marsden
Brian Holmes
Celine O'Sullivan
Fenella Page
Janice Eason
Lorraine Ward
Sue Woodward
Karen Narramore
Karen Meek

Mark-up
Victoria Morrison-Glenys
Nondus Banning-Boddy
Caroline Baxter

Supervising Editor
Nick Fletcher

Art Director
Neil Ross

Special Effects Supervisor
Scott Santoro

Colour Models
Designer:
Annie Elvin

Music
James Horner

Music Performed by
The London
Symphony Orchestra
and Musicians of the
AFM Local 47

Orchestrations
John Neufeld
Greig McRitchie

Music Editor
Jim Henrikson

Songs
"Somewhere Out There" by James Horner, Barry Manni, Cynthia Weil, performed by Cathy Cavadini; "Way Out West" by James Horner, Will Jennings; "Rawhide" by Dimitri Tiomkin, Ned Washington, performed by The Blues Brothers; "Dreams to Dream", "The Girl I Left Behind" by James Horner, Will Jennings, performed by Cathy Cavadini; "Dreams to Dream" (Final Version) by James Horner, Will Jennings, performed by Linda Ronstadt

Titles/Opticals
General Screen
Enterprises (London)
Pacific Title (LA)

Supervising Sound Editors
Louis L. Edemann
Chuck Neely

Supervising ADR Editor
Larry Singer

ADR Editor
Alan Nineberg

Sound Recordists
Music:
Shawn Murphy
Charlie Ajar
Foley:
Marilyn Graf
Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists
Supervisor:
Michael C. Casper
Daniel Leahy
Thomas Gerard

ADR:
Doc Kane
Foley:
James Ashwill

Sound Effects Editors
Nils C. Jensen
Doug Jackson

Sound Effects
Leonard T. Geschke
Gary M. Mundheim
Don Malouf

Foley
Taj Soundworks

Artists:
Kevin Bartnof
Hilda Hodges

Production Assistants
Martin Elvin
Jill Hopper
Tara Cole
Mark Swift

Voices
Phillip Glasser
Fievel
James Stewart
Wylie Burp
Erica Yohn
Mama
Cathy Cavadini
Tanya
Nehemiah Persoff
Papa
Dom Deluise
Tiger
Amy Irving
Miss Kitty
John Cleese
Cat R. Waul
Jon Lovitz
Chula
Jack Angel
Mickie McGowan
Fausto Bara
Larry Moss
Vanna Bonta
Nigel Pegram
Philip Clarke
Patrick Pinney
Jennifer Darling
Lisa Raggio
Annie Holiday
Lawrence Steffan
Sherry Lynn
David Tate
Lev Miler
Robert Watts
Additional Voices

6,781 feet
75 minutes

USA 1991

Directors: Phil Nibbelink, Simon Wells

The turn of the century. The immigrant Mousekewitz family have come to America to escape persecution in Russia and are living in poverty in New York. Young Fievel dreams of the Wild West and his hero, famous dog sheriff Wylie Burp, while his sister Tanya longs to be a singer, despite neighbourhood disapproval. Tiger, Fievel's timid cat friend, is upset because his girl, Miss Kitty, has just left for the Western states. Cat R. Waul, a gentleman crook, persuades the Mousekewitzes and their neighbours to leave the city for a new life out West where, he says, cats and mice live together in peace.

On the train, Fievel happens to overhear Waul and his confederates plotting to use the mice as slave labour and then eat them, whereupon he is caught and thrown into the desert. Tiger has followed his friends and fallen in with the Mousicans, a tribe of Native American mice who worship him as a god. Fievel is picked up by a hungry hawk and rescued by the Mousicans. The Mousekewitzes have already established themselves in the dusty town of Green River and are overjoyed when Fievel is returned to them, although Tanya has been distracted by Waul, who has given her a job as a singer in his saloon.

Fievel tries to warn the mice about Waul's schemes but is disbelieved. He is also disappointed to meet Wylie Burp and find him a broken-down old dog, but he encourages the sheriff to tutor Tiger in law enforcement skills, enabling the cat to do a convincing dog impression. Just as Waul is about to trigger his mousetrap, Wylie, Tiger and Fievel come into town and after a shoot-out with catapults, see off the villains. Waul is adopted by an overbearing matron who threatens to pamper him for life, Tiger and Miss Kitty are reunited, and the Mousekewitzes start to make a new life for themselves in the West.

Having covered much the same terrain as *Hester Street* and *The Godfather Part II* in *An American Tail*, this sequel moves Westward for a cat-and-mouse reprise of *Heaven's Gate* or *Shane*. Cute animals act out classic Western roles, even to the extent of having dog sheriff Wylie Burp (voiced by James Stewart) adopt the famous hand-on-elbow posture John Wayne borrowed from Harry Carey for the finale of *The Searchers*, just before he delivers the traditional curtain speech about finding your destiny in the West. Although it risks sailing past the attention spans of children with no grounding in the classic



...and a dog-tired genre

Western, the film still manages to be amusing at the expense of genre: reprising the 'rolling, rolling, rolling' theme of *Rawhide* as Fievel travels into town on a bouncing tumbleweed, casting Burp as the dog equivalent of the feisty old-timers from the films of Ford and Hawks, and winding up with a shoot-out that expertly combines a parody of *High Noon* and *Rio Bravo* with neat sight gags and some genuinely stirring action.

Like Amblin's *Back to the Future Part III*, this is a roundabout Western, borrowing from the cinematic past to add weight and much-needed charm to an essentially modern film form. Here there is also a sense of the classical virtues of Disney-style character animation being resurrected alongside the obviously high-tech effects sequences. With original director Don Bluth departed for his own, increasingly sugary projects - *All Dogs Go to Heaven*, *Rock-a-Doodle* - Fievel tones down the sentiment that was the major flaw of the first film, even to the extent of making a joke of the Linda Ronstadt song that provided the glutinous climax of *An American Tail*. Here the wistful Tanya reprises it in her tenement only to be pounded by rotten fruit flung by her annoyed neighbours.

This sequel is much more in the tradition of Spielberg's *Tiny Toon Adventures* TV series, with wisecracking to the fore, plenty of Warner Bros-style gags (one of Burp's tips to Tiger is in the art of "the lazy eye", the cartoon-style method of outstaring enemies with enormously elastic eyeballs), some screen-filling action in the *Roger Rabbit* mould, and a frenetic pace that only becomes too much in the ensemble musical numbers. The film does, however, find room for some more considered verbal humour, as in Burp's lengthy speech which begins from the premise that he is "dog-tired" and then crams in as many dog-reference clichés as possible to cumulatively hilarious effect. In its own modest and extremely pleasurable way, *An American Tail: Fievel Goes West* - title purists please note, it is not called *An American Tail 2* - is another step in the current rehabilitation of the Western as the American cinema's genre of preference.

Kim Newman

Bill & Ted's Bogus Journey

Certificate
PG

Distributor
Columbia TriStar

Production Company
Orion

Producer
Scott Kroopf

Co-producer
Neil Machlis

Production Co-ordinator
Michele Imperato

Location Manager
Ken Lavet

2nd Unit Director
Richard Yuricich

Casting
Karen Rea
Donna Ekholdt

Extras:
LA Casting
Bob Teitelbaum

Assistant Directors
Barry K. Thomas
Jeff Okabayashi
Hilbert Hakim

2nd Unit:
Janet Knutsen
Tamu Blackwell

Screenplay
Ed Solomon
Chris Matheson

Director of Photography
Oliver Wood

Colour
Deluxe

Camera Operators
Bill Roe

2nd Unit:
Craig Haagensen

Visual Effects
Greg McMurry

UV Lighting/Effects
Wildfire
Richard Green

Editors
David Finfer
Spencer Gross

Production Designer
David L. Snyder

Art Director
Greg Pickrell

Set Decorator
Robin Peyton

Set Dressers
Lead:
Michael J. Schmidt
Jeffrey A. Kushon
Chris Carlson
Dean W. Welch

Special Effects Co-ordinators
Stan Parks
2nd Unit Supervisor:
Richard Yuricich

Special Effects
Kevin S. Quibell
Roger W. Lifsey
Samuel E. Price
Doyle Smiley

Music
David Newman

Additional Music
Steve Vai
Sterling Air Guitars:
Jim Martin

Orchestrations
Randy Miller

Music Supervisor
Nicola Freeguard

Music Editor
Tom Villano

Songs
"The Reaper" by and performed by Steve Vai; "Shout It Out" by Mark Slaughter; Dana Strum, performed by Slaughter; "The Perfect Crime" by and performed by Faith No More; "Showdown" by Dirk Sullivan; Dan Krueger, Stan Robinson, performed by Love on Ice; "Go to Hell" by Dave Mustaine, Megadeth, performed by Megadeth; "Battle Stations" by Kip Winger, Reb Beach, performed by Winger; "Junior's Gone Wild" by Douglas T. Pinnick, Ty R. Taylor, Jerry

Gaskill, performed by King's X; "Dream of a New Day" by and performed by Richie Kotzen; "For the Love (of Music)" by Patrick Sugs, Dean Ortega, Gary Lee, Scott Garrett, performed by Neverland; "Candy Show Theme" by and performed by Juliann Nott; "My Honey's Lovin' Arms" by Herman Ruby, Joseph Meyer; "Tommy the Cat" by and performed by Primus; "Happy Birthday to You" by Mildred J. Hill, Patti S. Hill; "God Gave Rock N' Roll To You II" by Russ Ballard, Paul Stanley, Gene Simmons, Bob Ezrin, performed by Kiss; "The Reaper Rap" by Steve Vai (additional lyrics by William Sadler), performed by Steve Vai, Keanu Reeves, Alex Winter, William Sadler, Joss Ackland, Chelcie Ross, Terry Finn, Roy Brocksmith

Costume Design
Marie France

Costume Supervisor
Louis Infante III

Wardrobe
Nancy Steiner
Ed Fincher
Jered Green

Make-up
Michael Mills
Robin Beauch

Special Make-up Effects
Creature/EX:
Kevin Yagher

Title Design
Saxon/Ross Film Design

Titles/Opticals
Pacific Titles

Supervising Sound Editors
Dane Davis
Lance Laurienzo
Melinda Garey
Susan Ritter
Thomas W. Small
Lisa K. Wolf
Karyn Foster
Brian Ufberg
Devon Miller
Mark Herman
Betty Burkhardt
Lisa Linder
Joanna Jimenez

Sound Editor
Dane Tracks/
Soundswild

Sound Records
Mark "Frito" Long

Foley:
David Jobe

ADR:
Brian Lucas
Dolby stereo

Sound Re-records
Gene S. Cantamessa
Gregg Landaker
Michael Minkler
Bob Beemer

ADR:
John Hussein
Foley:
Robert Deschaine

Foley Artists
Joan Rowe
Gregg Barbanell

Production Assistants
Set:
Scott M. Cort
Mark Donovan
Bob Wagner
Beth Klein
Steve Kurland

Stunt Co-ordinator
Glenn Wilder

Cast
Alex Winter
Bill/Evil Bill
Keanu Reeves
Ted/Evil Ted
Jeff Miller
Bill Double
David Carrera
Ted Double
George Carlin
Rufus
Joss Ackland
De Nomolos
Sarah Trigger
Joanna
Annette Azcuy
Elizabeth
Hal Landon Jr
Captain Logan
Amy Stock-Poynton
Missy
Chelcie Ross
Colonel Oats
William Sadler
Grim Reaper
Arturo Gill
Ed Gale
Stations
Tom Allard
Big Station
Hal Landon Snr
Thomas Edison
Robert Noble
Bach
Jim Blanco Martin
Rocker
Eleni Kelakos
Ria Paschelle
Pam Grier
Ms Wardrobe
Roy Brocksmith
Deputy James
Dana Stevens
Valerie Spencer
Carol Rosenthal
Kathryn Miller
Women
Ed Solomon
Man
Dennis Ott
Demon Guard
Robert Cort
Screaming Tortured
Anthony Schmidt
Dark Figure
Brendan Ryan
Young Ted
Puppet by Yagher
Easter Bunny in Hell
William Thorne
Young Bill
Alex Winter
Granny Preston
Taj Mahal
Gatekeeper
John Ehrin
Einstein
Larry Moss
Da Vinci
Don Forney
Ben Franklin
Tom Allard
Trucker
Michael Shrimp
Chambers
Bruno Falcon
B&T Robots
Anthony Schmidt
Easter Bunny
Neil Machlis
BMW Man
Ed Cambridge
George Washington
Carver
Tad Horino
Confucius
Terry Finn
Woman in Heaven
with Scrolls
J. Patrick
McNamara
Mr Preston

8,411 feet
93 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Peter Hewitt

The University of Bill and Ted, San Dimas, 2691: Evil ex-gym teacher De Nomolos sends two life-like Bill and Ted replicants back through time to prevent the boys' band Wyld Stallyns from winning "The Battle of the Bands" and thence going on to become saviours of the world. The present day: the musically inept Bill and Ted are granted a place in the contest by its organiser Ms Wardrobe, and immediately propose to their girlfriends (English princesses picked up in their earlier adventures) who play keyboards and drums in Wyld Stallyns.

That evening, the evil robots trick Bill and Ted into thinking that their girlfriends are abandoning them, and then lead the pair into the desert where they are swiftly killed. Death arrives to transport them to the netherworld, but the spirits of Bill and Ted outwit the Grim Reaper and escape back to San Dimas, where the evil robots are harassing the princesses. Bodiless, Bill and Ted possess Ted's police chief father and a colleague, and attempt unsuccessfully to alert the police force.

A seance held by Missy (Bill and Ted's one-time schoolfriend, once Bill's stepmother and now wife to Ted's father) also goes wrong and the boys' spirits are cast into Hell, where each experiences a personal nightmare. They challenge Death to a game (if they win they will return to Earth, but if they lose they will be damned) and the pair triumph. En route to Earth, Death takes the boys to Heaven, where God introduces them to Station, the most brilliant scientist in the Universe, who builds two good Bill and Ted robots to defeat the evil replicants.

At the Battle of the Bands, all six Bill and Teds clash on stage. The good robots defeat their evil counterparts, but De Nomolos arrives in a time-travelling phone box, captures the TV screens of the world, and announces his plans for universal

domination. He is overpowered by Bill and Ted with the aid of Ms Wardrobe, who turns out to be Rufus (their futuristic mentor) in disguise. With the eyes of the world upon them, Bill and Ted step into the time machine, put in sixteen months of intensive guitar training, and return seconds later to perform a riotous set with Station on bongos and Death on bass. A coda documents Wyld Stallyns' world-liberating success, climaxing with their gigs on Mars, Station's home planet.

Since the low-key release of *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* in 1989, a cult following has grown up around these sublimely air-headed heroes, spawning a cartoon series, a limited range of merchandising, and a veritable thesaurus of outlandish phrases. Anyone declaring a situation to be "non-non-non-heinous", "egregiously bogus" or "most atypical" is clearly a connoisseur of 'Bill and Ted Speak'. Most of the laughs in *Excellent Adventure* came from the incongruity of the two teenagers talking their way through history in 'surfer dialect'. In this hugely enjoyable sequel, writers Ed Solomon and Chris Matheson have retained and expanded the verbal humour but also widened their comic horizons to conjure an ingeniously surreal and quite ridiculous world.

True to form, Bill and Ted react to each new marvel with a mixture of innocent amazement and unstoppable stupidity which guarantees their eventual triumph. Outstripping the original in terms of budget, plot ingenuity and directorial flair (British first-timer Peter Hewitt was hired on the strength of his award-winning short *The Candy Show*), *Bogus Journey* also introduces a third, fully rounded comic character, Death himself. Played with delightfully straight-faced charm by William Sadler, the Grim Reaper becomes a petulant figure of fun, complete with scythe and (inevitably) a Swedish accent.

Mark Kermode

Billy Bathgate

Certificate
15

Distributor
Warner Bros

Production Company
Touchstone
In association with
Touchwood Pacific
Partners I

Producers
Arlene Donovan
Robert F. Colesberry

Production Associate
Laurel Robinson

Production Controller
Kathleen McGill

Supervising Production Co-ordinators
Judith Lyn Brown
Michael Boonstra

Unit Production Managers
Thomas A. Razzano
Bruce S. Pustin

Location Managers
Jan Foster
Patricia Anne Doherty

Casting
North Carolina:
Mary Weisgerber
Pat Birch

Extras:
Bill Dance
Tammy L. Smith

Extras NY:
Sylvia Fay
Fleet Emerson

Assistant Directors:
Brian Cook
Anthony B. Adler
Carl Goldstein

Screenplay
Tom Stoppard
Based on the novel
by E.L. Doctorow

Director of Photography
Nestor Almendros

Colour
DuArt
Prints by
Technicolor

Camera Operators
Tony Jannelli
2nd:
Bruce MacCallum

Editors
Alan Heim
Robert Reitano

Additional:
David Ray

Production Designer
Patrizia von
Brandenstein

Art Directors
Tim Galvin
Dennis Bradford

North Carolina:
John Willett

Art Department Co-ordinators
Claudette Didul
North Carolina:
Maria A. Nay

Set Decorators
George De Titta Snr
North Carolina:
Hilton Rosemarin

Scenic Artists
Jon Ringbom

Camera:
Peter G. Hackman

Special Effects Co-ordinator
Joe Unsinn

Music
Mark Isham

Music Director
J.A.C. Redford

Orchestrations
Thomas Pasatieri

Music Editor
Todd Kasow

Songs
"Oyfn Pripetshok"
(On the Hearth) by
Mark Warshawsky;
"Bye Bye Blackbird"
by Ray Henderson,
Mort Dixon; "I'm in
the Mood for Love"
by Jimmy McHugh,
Dorothy Fields;
"I Only Have Eyes
for You" by Harry



Non-non-non-heinous: Alex Winter, Keanu Reeves

Warren, Al Dubin, performed by Eddy Duchin and his Orchestra; "Who" by Jerome Kern, Oscar Hammerstein II; "My Romance" by Richard Rodgers, Lorenz Hart; "Washington Post March" by John Phillip Sousa; "The Mule Walk" by and performed by James P. Johnson; "Der Hirt auf dem Felsen" (The Shepherd on the Rock) by Franz Schubert, performed by Helen Donath, Dieter Klöcker (clarinet), Klaus Donath (piano)

Costume Design
Joseph G. Aulisi

Costume Supervisors
Men:
Guy Tanno
Michael Atkins
Women:
Jennifer Nichols
Dustin Hoffman:
Kathleen Gallagher

Wardrobe
Supervisors
Men:
Michael P. Dennison
Women:
Kendall Errair

Make-up Artists
Richard Dean
Rosemarie Zurlo
Bruce Willis:
Scott H. Eddo

Special Make-up Effects
Michael Laudati

Title Design
Henry Wolf
David Blumenthal

Titles/Opticals
The Effects House

Supervising Sound Editor
Don Sable

Sound Editors
Bitty O'Sullivan Smith
Sandy Rackow
Ahmad Shirazi
Kevin Lee

Supervising ADR Editors
Deborah Wallach
Harriet Fildow Winn

Sound Recordists
Danny Michael
Music:
Stephen Krause
Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists
Tom Fleischman
Lee Dichter

Foley Artist
Elisha Birnbaum

Consultant
Sondra Lee

Production Assistants
Douglas Tirola
Jon C. Scheide
Paul Bernard
Charles Rees Lyons
Libby Featherston
Scott Kordish
Set:
Matthew T. Weiner

Stunt Co-ordinators
John Robotham
Michael Russo

Stunts
Cheryl Wheeler-Dixon
Noon Orsatti
Daniel W. Barringer

Stunt Pilot
J.W. "Corkey" Fornof

Race Horse Co-ordinator
David Rich

Cast
Dustin Hoffman
Dutch Schultz
Nicole Kidman
Drew Preston
Loren Dean
Billy Bathgate
Bruce Willis
Bo Weinberg
Steven Hill
Otto Berman

Steve Buscemi
Irving
Billy Jaye
Mickey
John Costelloe
Lulu
Tim Jerome
Dixie Davis
Stanley Tucci
Lucky Luciano
Mike Starr
Julie Martin
Robert F. Colesberry
Jack Kelly
Stephen Joyce
Mr Hines
Frances Conroy
Mary Behan
Moir Kelly
Rebecca
Kevin Corrigan
Arnold
Noel Derecki
Josh Weinstein
Danny Zorn
Rob Kramar
Billy's Gang
Simon Jutras
Hotel Manager
Kenny Vance
Paul Herman
Dutch's Thugs
Teddy Cleanthes
Supervisor
William Jay Marshall
George
Harry O'Reilly
Fire Inspector
Xander Berkeley
Harvey Preston
Barry McGovern
Father McInerney
Barton Heyman
Banker
Christopher Rubin
Harvey's Friend
Richard Bekins
Carter
Katherine Houghton
Charlotte
Todd Louiso
Bell Boy
Robert D. Raiford
Judge
Terry Loughlin
Mr Chambers
Stephen M. Aronson
Tom Ambrose
Rick Warner
Chuck Kinlaw
Martin Thompson
Todd Brenner
Charles Ress Lyons
Reporters
Rachel York
Embassy Club Singer
Kip Newton
Bartender
Karen L. Thorson
Woman at Table
Nick Pernice
Tote Man
John Clohessy
Racetrack Programme Seller
Darryl Caron
Nicholas E. Tishler
Bell Hops
Joseph Dolphin
News Vendor
Judy Allison
Bingo Winner
John J. Hladik
Auctioneer
Lewis W. Lake
Farmer
Kas Self
Woman at Bake Sale
James Raitt
Chophouse Bartender
Rick Washburn
John A. Moio
Max Maxwell
Jerry Guarino
Hit Men
Vincent Pantone
Tony Cucci
Anthony Catanese
Paulie DiCocco
Luciano Thugs
William G. Kane
Man in Window
Frank McLean
Newsboy

9,588 feet
107 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Robert Benton

New York City, 1935. Teenager Billy Bathgate, the youngest member of the diminishing Dutch Schultz gang, jumps aboard a tugboat carrying the mob leader and his disloyal lieutenant, Bo Weinberg. The latter, his feet encased in cement by another gang member, Irving, is bound for a watery grave, while Schultz takes Weinberg's tearful companion, Mrs Drew Preston, below decks. Upon being asked, Billy tells Bo how he got involved in the gang... As a boy, hanging around with his friends near one of Schultz's bootleg depots, Billy catches the gangster's attention with his skilful juggling, and later, with a combination of luck and guile, penetrates Schultz's numbers racket headquarters.

Taken under the wing of the gang's money man, Otto Berman, Billy witnesses another gang breaking up one of Schultz's Harlem numbers drops. He identifies the hoodlum responsible, and in one of his sudden eruptions of violence, Schultz cuts the man's throat in a barber's chair. It is Billy who finds the evidence (a gambling chip) that proves Weinberg has been negotiating with rival gangs... On board the tug, Weinberg asks Billy to check on Drew, and he sees Schultz intimidating her into renouncing Weinberg... After their return to the city, Billy is entrusted by Schultz with looking after Drew, and he discovers that she is a society type, whose marriage to the homosexual Harvey Preston is a front for her wild social life.

Billy and Drew, who is now Schultz's lover, accompany Schultz and the rest of the gang to Onondaga, a quiet town in upstate New York to which Berman has arranged to have Schultz's imminent trial for income tax evasion transferred. As Schultz and his confederates set about winning over the town's residents, Billy and Drew, who are masquerading as the racketeer's protégé and his governess, begin to fall in love. Eventually, Billy tells Drew how Weinberg died... On the point of being pushed off the tug, Weinberg makes Billy promise that he will protect Drew... In the town's Catholic church, Schultz is baptised, with Lucky Luciano in attendance. Luciano leaves abruptly, after enquiring about Weinberg, and the worried Schultz then kills another troublesome associate, Julie Martin, in a rage.

At Berman's prompting, Billy and Drew are sent out of the way, to the Saratoga resort and racetrack, where they finally make love. But Billy has overheard Schultz and Berman agree that Drew, dangerous because she knows of Weinberg's murder, must

be killed; he saves her from a murder attempt by Irving, and despatches her to her husband's care. Schultz is acquitted, but is enraged to learn that the special New York prosecutor, Thomas Dewey, now plans to indict him on state charges. Berman takes the desperate Schultz to New Jersey, where Billy recalls a slip of Drew's, confirming that Weinberg and Luciano were in cahoots, just before Schultz and his men are wiped out by Luciano's gang. Lucky as ever, Billy is caught and released by Luciano, managing in the process to cast suspicion on Dixie Davis, Schultz's lawyer, who set him up for assassination.

Billy Bathgate is a film of minor virtues and major faults, quite the opposite of its young hero who, despite becoming an accessory to two murders by the end of the third reel, never loses the innocence that forms the core of his character. In adapting E.L. Doctorow's loquacious novel, director Robert Benton and screenwriter Tom Stoppard have been caught up in contradictory impulses, trying to evoke the celebratory, if destructive, individualism of old-style gangster films while remaining true to the post-*Godfather* revisionism of petty men with cramped ambitions. Where Doctorow spun out a parable about the corrupting influence of the American Dream with its over-emphasis on material success, the film-makers cancel out that corruption, turning the story into a cautionary fable about ambition's surfeit, but not its nature.

Benton has dealt before with youthful soiling, in his first film, *Bad Company*, an effort notable for its ferocious depictions of sin, also in a revisionist context, on that occasion the Western. But *Billy Bathgate*'s problems arise from its very structure: all the action is filtered through Billy's perspective – the novel's first-person narration is replaced by its visual correlative – so Billy has to be a completely credible witness. His wide eyes have to be blinkered against any hint of his own culpability. Benton is more or less stuck with a kid who swims through a sea of murder and bribery without ever getting wet.

Thanks to the performance of Steven Hill as the learned crook Otto Berman (a real-life figure whose nickname – "Abbadabba" – was a tribute to his mathematical magic), the film very nearly slips through this hole. Hill portrays a man of strong convictions whose fond epigrammatic remonstrances to Billy ("If you want to stay in the gangster business, don't ask so many questions") are effortlessly eloquent, obviously motivated by a belief in the underground legitimacy of his profession, the hypocrisies of the

world at large, and his fondness for the hungry, eager kid.

While Hill's Berman manages to forge connections with the characters around him, Dustin Hoffman's Schultz remains closeted until the bloody end. A curious choice to play the gangster in the first place – Schultz was only thirty-three when he died, and a beefy 5'9", blue-eyed with light brown hair (much like Vic Morrow, who played him in Joseph Pevney's modestly enjoyable, violent 1961 programmer, *Portrait of a Mobster*) – Hoffman makes a series of curious acting choices as well. Schultz has spasms of violence which at their worst lead him to commit a pair of shocking, careless murders, once beating a fire inspector to death at his night-club and later blowing out the brains of a troublesome muscle-headed business partner. But Hoffman lets these erupt without warning, as if Schultz were possessed by some passing demon. The rest of the time, the man who murdered Legs Diamond acts the part of an exasperated businessman tangled in governmental red tape.

Too often, *Billy Bathgate* looks like a new Disney attraction – Gangsterland. Nestor Almendros' burnished cinematography, the characteristic use of natural light notwithstanding, is over-dramatic, even stagy, and Mark Isham's score sounds like a series of coronation fanfares. The combination can be idiotic, as when Drew escapes her killers by flying off from a secluded airfield in her husband's private plane. As the woman, whose one positive act has been Billy's deflowering, soars off to celestial strains, one cannot forget we're saying good-bye to a moneyed thrill-seeker, not a vaulting spirit.

Earlier, however, when Benton has his feet on the ground, he does pull off a coup of *mise en scène*. After Billy gets his ten-dollar juggling tip from Dutch, he escapes from his jealous friends by racing through Bronx streets and alleyways, momentarily freed from their grip by the clutched bill, and Benton captures the flight in a series of exciting, fast tracking shots. When Billy finally pulls up in a secluded basement, it's to buy a gun; from there he travels to his girlfriend's Yiddish neighbourhood club, where he catches her eye by flashing a dollar bill at the window. All in all, a powerful and exuberant invocation of the power of money, the poor man's ticket out of poverty and into dreams. Here Billy's pursuit of wealth is not the ignoble strife of an unscrupulous mediocrity, but the keenest indication of his promise. But for *Billy Bathgate*, as well as *Billy Bathgate*, it's a promise unfulfilled.

Henry Sheehan

The Bridge

Certificate
12
Distributor
Eclectic Films
Production Company
Moonlight (Bridge) Ltd
Producer
Lyn Goleby
Production Co-ordinator
Sue Sheldon
Production Manager
Nicky Kentish Barnes
Location Managers
Mark Mostyn
Sue Quinn
Assistant Directors
Barry Wasserman
Mark Layton
Anthony Bryans
Screenplay
Adrian Hodges
Based on the novel by
Maggie Hemingway
Director of Photography
David Tattersall
Colour
Fujicolor
Steadicam Operators
Peter Cavaciuti
Peter Robertson
Editor
Michael Ellis
Production Designer
Terry Pritchard
Set Decorator
Peta Button
Special Effects
Any Effects
Music
Richard G. Mitchell
Music Associate
Peter Whitfield
Costume Design
Jenny Beavan
Wardrobe Supervisors
Sue Honeyborne
Stephen Cornish
Make-up Artist
Sula Loizou
Titles
Plume Partners
Sound Editors
Kant Pan
Dialogue:
Richard Dunford
Sound Recordists
Ian Voigt
Music:
Peter Maxwell
Michael Boggis
Dolby stereo
Stunt Co-ordinators
Colin Skeaping
Alan Stuart
Stand-ins
Mark Palmer
Andrea Stainsby

Cast
Saskia Reeves
Isobel Hetherington
David O'Hara
Philip Wilson Steer
Joss Ackland
Smithson
Rosemary Harris
Aunt Jude
Anthony Higgins
Reginald Hetherington
Geraldine James
Mrs Todd
Tabitha Allen
Emma Hetherington
Dominique Rossi
Mary
Karina Rossi
Sophie
Any Phillips
Bella
Jo Powell
Mrs Pierce
Michele Wade
Mrs Rount
Peter Blythe
Reverend Rount
Tim Barker
John
William Job
Colonel
Ben Daniels
Rogers
Deborah Fox
Lucy

9,179 feet
102 minutes

United Kingdom 1990

Director: Sydney MacCartney

Summer, 1887, Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. The artist Philip Wilson Steer arrives in Walberswick, Suffolk, for his annual painting retreat. While out sketching, he meets seven-year-old Emma Hetherington, who is spending the summer with her mother and sisters at their Aunt Jude's house. Later, Steer catches a brief glimpse of Emma's mother, Isobel Hetherington, and subsequently draws her from memory. That night, there are heavy storms which result in the deaths of Todd, a local fisherman, and his son. The following day, Steer pays a courtesy call on the Hetheringtons and meets Isobel. They are obviously attracted to each other.

The holiday is interrupted by the arrival of Isobel's husband Reginald, who announces that his mother has just died. Isobel accompanies him to London for the funeral, while Steer visits Todd's widow in order to paint her, only to rush away when she questions him about her husband's death. Isobel returns to Suffolk; Steer offers to paint her portrait, and later accompanies the family to the local Jubilee celebrations. He and Isobel arrange to meet the following day by the estuary bridge, where Isobel tells Steer about her dead marriage while he confesses to being in love with her.

Since their love seems doomed, Steer decides to go abroad; Aunt Jude and her friend, the local lawyer Smithson, assume that the distraught Isobel is missing her husband and send for him. Steer returns to Suffolk, and he and Isobel arrange to rendezvous at a beach hut, where they subsequently make love. Unbeknownst to them, Emma sees them leaving. The following day, Steer takes the completed portrait of Isobel to the house, and Reginald agrees to pay a thousand guineas for it. Later, during a seaside walk, Emma falls off the estuary bridge and stumbles across the body of Todd's widow, who has committed suicide.

While recovering from the shock, Emma tells Aunt Jude that she has seen Isobel and Steer together. Aunt Jude drags Isobel into her bedroom, locks her up and informs Reginald. Inviting Steer over, Reginald orders him to leave Isobel alone and indicates that he is prepared to pay him off - which Steer refuses. Reginald later tells Isobel that Steer has been bribed to stop seeing her. Isobel rushes off to the estuary bridge but is found by Reginald. Steer secretly observes the scene and the image later forms the basis of one of his paintings, "The Bridge".

The basis for Maggie Hemingway's original novel (written and published in the mid-1980s) is that the Impressionist painter Wilson Steer visited Suffolk every summer - "everything else is speculation". The opening credits supply us with this information while the screen is filled with a close-up of the artist layering oil paint on to a small patch of canvas. This is film as reproduction art, recreating a painting, a period and its values (Victorian, at the zenith of Empire), with accomplished direction (a feature debut for commercials man Sydney MacCartney) and polished photography.

But the film also aspires to an up-market sensibility, as if to distinguish itself from populist historical dramas such as the Catherine Cookson ripping yarns which recently pulled the crowds on prime-time TV. It is presumed that the audience is informed about Steer and thus will savour the sweet irony of the tormented young artist being trashed by the *Telegraph* art critic ("You must be doing something right if the *Telegraph* doesn't like you"; the joke is that this is exactly the kind of film that the *Telegraph* would probably like), rejected by the Academy and thwarted in love yet eventually becoming a valued member of the British Impressionist School. The film closes on the completed picture of "The Bridge", with Steer venerated after all that agony and ecstasy.

It's a rather simple point. Behind every pretty picture there's a story of great suffering. But whose suffering? Steer is seen to be some sort of Victorian ambulance chaser - wielding pencil and paper in search of a local calamity. He reaches for his sketchbook when Todd's body is found and later attempts to draw his poor widow ("What a privilege to be there - to see life stripped down to its essentials", Steer earnestly tells Isobel). Adrian Hodges' script seems to be without any vestige of irony here: the sacrifice of the working classes in the sub-plot just serves to provide a nice bit of pathos to highlight the doomed affair between Isobel and Steer.

But their central narrative is also in need of a more self-reflexive approach. The scene of a grown woman being dragged into a room and locked up like a child because of her infidelity is as suffocating as a tight corset (*The Bridge* is set nearly ten years after Ibsen's *Nora* slammed the door on her way out of her loveless doll's house). While the film does not exactly condone this, one questions why anyone a century on should want to reinvent such a scenario. Steer is allowed to turn his tragedy into art while Isobel is merely muted into the picture.

Lizzie Francke

Delicatessen

Certificate
15
Distributor
Electric Pictures
Production Companies
Constellation/UGC/
Hachette Première
With the
collaboration of
Sofinergie/
Sofinergie 2/
Investimage 2/
Investimage 3
Producer
Claudie Ossard
Associate Producer
Michèle Arnould
Production Manager
Jacques Scarrone
Post-production Supervisor
Antonie Grugard
Casting
Pierre-Jacques
Benichou
Assistant Directors
Jean Marc Tostivint
Jean Christophe
Spadaccini
Screenplay
Jean-Pierre Jeunet
Marc Caro
Screen Collaborator
Gilles Adrien
Director of Photography
Darius Khondji
In colour
Editor
Hervé Schneid
Art Director
Marc Caro
Set Decorators
Jean-Philippe Carp
Miljen Kijakovic
Jean Rabasse
Aline Bonetto
Storyboard Artist
Marc Caro
Special Effects
Olivier Gleyze
Jean-Baptiste Bonetto
Yves Domenjoud
Models
Jean Rabasse
Jérôme Signori
Valérie Berthouix
Andréa Linares
Marie Desforges
Valérie Sebast
Music
Carlos D'Alessio
Music Extracts
"Entry of the
Gladiators"; "Una
Legrima toya"
by M. Mores;
"Bongo Bolero"
by Pedro Salero
Music Performed by
Cello:
Hubert Varron
Isabelle Pinardel

Beckett
mod cons...



Music
Arrangements
 Jean-Michel Bergounioux
Music Consultant
 René Taquet
Songs
 "I Do Like to Be Beside the Seaside";
 "The Streets of Paris";
 "Médaille d'honneur";
 "Ardeente Elisabeth";
 "Fancyful Agnès"
Costume Design
 Valérie Pozzo di Borgo
Wardrobe
 Valérie Pozzo di Borgo
Make-up
 Hugo Quiroga
Opticals
 Baptiste Magnien
Sound Editors
 Gérard Hardy
 Anne Marie L'Hôte
Sound Recordist
 Jérôme Thiault
 Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
 Vincent Arnardi
 Music:
 Michel Wanker
Production
Assistant
 Caroline Selle
Stunt Co-ordinator
 Patrick Cauderlier
Stunts
 Remi Canaple
 William Caynard
 Arlette Spetebroot
 Didier Moirot
Subtitles
 Cinétitres LTC

Cast
Dominique Pinon
 Louison
Marie-Laure Dougnac
 Julie
Jean-Claude Dreyfus
 The Butcher
Karin Viard
 Mademoiselle Plusse
Ticky Holgado
 M. Tapioca
Anne-Marie Pisani
 Madame Tapioca
Jacques Mathou
 Roger Cube
Rufus
 Robert Cube
Jean-François Perrier
 Monsieur Interligator
Sylvie Laguna
 Madame Interligator
Chick Ortega
 The Postman
Howard Vernon
 Monsieur Potin
Patrick Paroux
 Rolls
Jean-Luc Caron
 Janvier
Eric Averlant
 Tourneur
Dominique Betenfeld
 Paumeau
Maurice Lamy
 Pank
Marc Caro
 Fox
Raymond Forestier
 Milan
David Defever
 Trappe
Bernard Flavien
 Brelan
Robert Baud
 Voltange
Pascal Benezech
 Boban Anevski
Mikael Todde
 Edith Ker
Dominique Zardi

8,937 feet
99 minutes

Subtitles

France 1990

Directors: Jean-Pierre Jeunet, Marc Caro

The future. In a decrepit city, with society in a state of breakdown, a butcher flourishes by selling meat in exchange for the grain that is now the standard currency. The meat comes from the handymen that the butcher employs, killing them to feed his famished tenants: the Kube brothers, who manufacture bleating toys; the Tapioca family; the butcher's glamorous mistress Mademoiselle Plusse; and the prissy Interligators. Another neighbour, Monsieur Potin, feeds himself by breeding frogs and snails.

After one handyman is killed following a failed escape attempt, a replacement arrives in the form of Louison, a clown who left the circus after his monkey partner had been killed and eaten. Louison soon forms a mutual attraction to Julie, the butcher's myopic, cello-playing daughter, who is also desired by a brutish postman. Louison visits Julie for tea, but falls asleep after she accidentally gives him a soporific infusion. Having tried to warn Louison of the fate in store for him, Julie begs her father to let him go. When he refuses, she descends into the sewers to make contact with the Troglodists, an underground vegetarian resistance movement.

At night, the butcher attempts to lure Louison to his death by making Tapioca's mother-in-law scream; but, under the influence of Julie's infusion, he remains asleep, and the butcher hacks off Robert Kube's leg instead. Julie persuades the Troglodists to rescue Louison in exchange for her father's grain; but the postman intercepts her radio messages to them.

During a storm, while Louison's circus act is on television, the butcher lures him on to the roof and, as they struggle, the Troglodists mistakenly kidnap Mademoiselle Plusse. The Interligators' flat is meanwhile blown up in the course of one of Aurore Interligator's elaborate suicide attempts, occasioned by the promptings of a mysterious voice (in fact, Roger Kube's).

After Louison has saved Julie from his advances, the postman sets a trap for the Troglodists, one of whom is killed in their next attempted raid. Pursued by the tenants, Louison and Julie escape by flooding the building; the butcher finally dies while trying to kill Louison with the latter's weapon, a boomerang-like knife known as "the Australian". With the shop closed, and the sky at last beginning to lighten, Julie and Louison play a cello-and-saw duet on the roof.

Delicatessen is perhaps a misnomer, since what the film really brings to mind is some heavily spiced, raw-boned charcuterie. This is not to say that it lacks delicacy. In fact, the closest analogy within the film for its overall elegance of conception are Aurore Interligator's complex, Heath Robinson-styled suicide mechanisms. The grace with which the choreographed tracking shots glide over the machineries to their final noisy débâcles reoccurs through a number of set-pieces, almost musical in their deployment of comic tension – such as the slow build-up to the apocalyptic flooding of the entire building. In one literally musical sequence, the butcher's love-making sets the pace for an accelerating concerto of bedsprings, braces, bicycle pump and cello, ending in an orgasmic moment of collapse.

What makes *Delicatessen* unusual in the context of recent French cinema is that the showy execution works perfectly within a fully conceived setting. Where the glossy worlds of the Besson-Beineix school invariably allude to a multiplicity of filmic settings outside their own limits (invariably resulting in an amorphous sense of place), the world of *Delicatessen* is almost hermetic. The film appears to be set in a post-apocalyptic future that has reverted to the shoddiness of wartime France. Julie plays vintage music-hall songs on her record-player; Louison is seen on television doing his act in a decidedly retro setting; a briefly glimpsed newspaper, aptly entitled *Les Temps Difficiles*, recalls the look of wartime propaganda rags, with its inveighing against the subversive Troglodists; and there is an overall visual tawdriness in common with other recent films with a 40s setting (*Docteur Petiot*, *Uranus*).

The anachronism holds throughout, partly in a spirit of stylistic allusion – the mist-shrouded house combines the look of the Bates Motel with that of Alexandre Trauner's settings for Carné, while the rooftop views more particularly recall René Clair's skyline panoramas. The anachronism sets up a paradox

that enhances rather than undermines the sense of time out of joint – characters remark that "there is nothing left outside", that "this is nowhere", yet somehow television still broadcasts. All this adds to the curious impression of a decrepit Beckett world with some mod cons intact.

The density of its references, and the precision of the execution, allow *Delicatessen* to transcend the pop-video aesthetic which nevertheless underlies it. Its makers – Caro reputedly storyboarded it and perfected the 'look', while Jeunet is to be credited with the direction proper – worked in ads and pop video, as well as collaborating on the cult short *Le Bunker de la dernière Rafale*. The 'clip' aesthetic is still visible in the episodic gag structure, and in the use of actors as living puppets rather than conventionally conceived characters: notably, the wiry Dominique Pinon with his marvellous plasticine features, the hideously lit, smooth-faced butcher Jean-Claude Dreyfus, and bit parts like the Interligators with their nervous patrician horse faces.

The film also owes much to the French comic-strip tradition – to the school of *Métal Hurlant*, a comic which in the 70s reinvented some of the most parochial images of French culture in an ironic new light, as well as to the darker humour of the absurdist *Hara-Kiri* magazine (these strands were till now perhaps best represented in film by *Adrenaline*, a portmanteau film seen at last year's London Film Festival). *Delicatessen*'s comic-strip structure only wears thin towards the end when it fails to balance the adventure element (the Troglodists' raid) with the preparations for an apocalyptic climax. But the endless small observations and visual conjuring tricks keep it buoyant throughout. In fact, the circus sub-text suggests the other main parallel for *Delicatessen* in current French pop culture: in its own, slightly less demonstrative way, this is the nearest French cinema has yet produced to an Archaos performance.

Jonathan Romney



...Hara-kiri humour

Hachigatsu-no-Kyoshikyoku (Rhapsody in August)



Over-reconciled: Sachiko Murase, Richard Gere

Certificate

U

Distributor

Palace Pictures

Production Company

Kurosawa Production

In association with

Shochiku Ltd

Executive Producer

Toru Okuyama

Producer

Hisao Kurosawa

Associate Producers

Yoshio Inoue

Seikichi Iizumi

Production Supervisor

Masahiko Kumada

Production Co-ordinator

Iwahiko Suehiro

Production Manager

Osamu Hosoya

Associate Director

Ishiro Honda

Assistant Director

Takashi Koizumi

Screenplay

Akira Kurosawa

Based on the novel

Nabe-no-Naka

by Kiyoko Murata

Directors of Photography

Takao Saito

Masaharu Ueda

In colour

Assistant Photographers

Yoshinori Sekiguchi

Hidehiro Igarashi

Masahiko Hayashi

Shigeo Suzuki

Hiroyuki Kitazawa

Hiroshi Ishida

Motonobu Kiyohisa

Lighting

Takeharu Sano

Camera Operators

Takao Saito

Masaharu Ueda

Editor

Akira Kurosawa

Associate Editors

Ryusuke Otsubo

Sugura Muraki

Art Director

Yoshiro Muraki

Set Decorators

Tsuneo Shimura

Tsuyoshi Shimizu

Kyoko Tomoya

Takanori Otake

Special Effects

Ichiro Minawa

Masatoshi Saito

Electronic Special Effects

HiVision/Sony

Music

Shinichiro Ikebe

Music Extracts

Antonio Vivaldi

Franz Schubert

Songs

Franz Schubert

Costume Design

Kazuko Kurosawa

Wardrobe

Yoko Nagano

Mitsuru Otsuka

Make-up

Shoshichiro Ueda

Tameyuki Sōmi

Norio Sano

Title Design

Shunsetsu

Imai/Seishinkai

Titles/Opticals

Den Film Effects

Sound Editor

Kenichi Benitani

Sound Recordist

Kenichi Benitani

Sound Effects

Toyo Onkyo Kamome

Creative Consultant

Ishiro Honda

Production Assistants

Tomohiro Yoneda

Naoto Sakai

Toru Tanaka

Vittorio dalle Ole

Subtitles

WJJ Opticals

Supervisor:

H. Eisenman

Cast

Sachiko Murase

Kane

Hisashi Igawa

Tadao

Narumi Kayashima

Machiko

Tomoko Ohtakara

Tami

Mitsunori Isaki

Shinjiro

Toshié Negishi

Yoshie

Choichiro

Kawarasaki

Noboru

Hidetaka Yoshioka

Tateo

Mié Suzuki

Minako

Richard Gere

Clark

8,773 feet

97 minutes

Subtitles

Japan 1990

Director: Akira Kurosawa

Four children – Tateo, Minako, Tami and Shinjiro – are staying with their grandmother Kane in the country near Nagasaki. Tateo's parents send a postcard from Hawaii, where they are visiting Kane's older brother, now dying, who had emigrated to Hawaii to become a successful pineapple grower. In Nagasaki, the children visit the schoolyard where their grandfather died in the atomic bomb blast. Fascinated by the story of the bomb, the children begin to discover the past, and learn the names of Kane's many brothers and sisters. As she begins to remember the names, she tells the children more about her family, and the children visit places identified with her brothers and sisters – a cedar grove in the mountains, and a waterfall said to be haunted by a wood spirit.

Kane remembers another brother, who obsessively drew eyes, and has a vision of the eye in the bomb blast itself. She agrees to visit her brother in Hawaii, but her children arrive, and begin to talk about the prospect of jobs offered in Hawaii by Clark, Kane's Japanese-American nephew. They admit that they never told the Hawaiian relatives how their father was killed by the bomb, for fear of offending them – a reticence that the children regard as a cynical ploy not to alienate their favour.

When Clark arrives to visit, having had a letter from Kane about her husband, the family are convinced that he will break off the relationship, but Clark tells them how moved he was when he heard the news, and asks to see the schoolyard where his uncle died. He learns about the family's history, and with them commemorates the anniversary of the bomb. News arrives that Clark's father has died, and he leaves. When a thunderstorm breaks, Kane is convinced that the bomb has dropped, and runs off into the rain, pursued by her family.

Rhapsody in August – the August of the bomb's dropping – is a chamber-piece footnote to the overblown *Dreams*, and a further commemoration of the atomic legacy to Japan. Although on a smaller scale, it shares the earlier film's naive overstatement. It argues for a reconciliation of the tensions that can only be exorcised by being recognised rather than swept under the carpet, as the middle generation attempts to do here. It also pleads for reconciliation between generations, and pays homage to the wisdom of the old and the energy of the young; as is to be expected in this simplistic schema, the generation in between takes the brunt of the criticism,

being seen as corruptible, shallow and materialistic. Clark – the proverbial 'American uncle' – is a pivotal figure in the reconciliation process, bringing together generations and nationalities.

But 'reconciliation' is the wooliest of concepts on which to build a visual narrative, and it is no surprise that *Rhapsody* founders on sentimental didacticism. Its most leaden moment is the children's visit to the Nagasaki memorial, as they solemnly recite the names of the nations who have contributed commemorative monuments. The punchline is that there is no American contribution. With such a weight of historical symbolism to hand, the film is unable to let symbols speak for themselves, but signposts them mercilessly. The twisted climbing frame in the school playground packs its own weight of historical pathos, but Kurosawa has us visit it twice – the second time in the presence of a civic procession, which Clark and the family watch with bowed heads.

The film's greatest flaw is its tendency to milk these monuments for their obvious symbolism, and to treat symbols as monuments. Even Richard Gere – wooden as ever, albeit with convincingly fluent Japanese diction – serves a similar function: America embodied. The most telling moment in this respect is the scene at the official commemoration of the bomb, as Clark and one of his young cousins watch a long train of black ants climbing up a rose stem. As the camera tracks slowly up the flower, Kurosawa cuts to the two awestruck spectators of this marvel of nature – thereby effectively sabotaging what might otherwise have been a strikingly inscrutable vision.

Only in the final, melodramatic scene does the film burst its own schematic bounds. As the family pursue Kane in the torrential rain, the scene switches to slow motion, and no matter how falteringly she hobbles along, the others never seem to catch up with her. This sleight of vision is played out to the accompaniment of an elaborately arranged, and altogether twee, version of a song that the children sang earlier about regeneration and the wonders of nature.

Does the song's perkiness belie the grim extremity of the images, or does the torrential rain mock the song's sprightly optimism? What is suggested is that the horror of the bomb and of the accompanying 'black rain' has not been exorcised, and must be relived again and again. This puts a question mark over the earlier pleas for reconciliation with the (personal) past, to suggest that one with the wider past (History) is never quite possible.

Jonathan Romney

Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse

Certificate
15
Distributor
Blue Dolphin
Production Company
Zaloom Mayfield
In association with
Zoetrope Studios
**Executive-in-charge
of Production**
Steven Hewitt
Executive Producers
Doug Claybourne
Fred Roos
**Supervising
Producers**
Michael Doqui
Fred Fuchs
Producers
George Zaloom
Les Mayfield
Production Manager
Leslie Jett
**Post-production
Supervisor**
Thomas C. Dugan
**Post-production
Co-ordinators**
Daniel Gillett
TJ Lamanna
Kevin Lillestol
John Pace
**Documentary
Footage Director**
Eleanor Coppola
Screenplay
Fax Bahr
George Hickenlooper
Camera Operators
Philippines:
Larry Carney
Eleanor Coppola
Bill Neal
Doug Ryan
USA:
Les Blank
Shana Hagan
John Heller
Igor Meglic
Kevin O'Brien
Steve Wacks
In colour
Editors
Michael Hreer
Jay Miracle
Music
Todd Boekelheide
**Music from Apocalypse
Now:**
Carmine Coppola
Francis Coppola
Percussion:
Mickey Hart
Orchestrations
Conrad Susa
Music Extracts
"O Mimì, tu più non
torni", "Son Andati"
from *La Bohème* by
Giacomo Puccini; "The
Ride of the Valkyries"
from *Die Walküre* by
Richard Wagner
Songs
"Suzie Q" by Dale
Hawkins, S.J. Lewis,
E. Brodwater, performed
by Flash Cadillac;
"Anything Goes" by Cole
Porter; "The End" by and
performed by The Doors
Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title
**Supervising
Sound Editor**
Burton M. Weinstein
Sound Recordists
Philippines:
Larry Carney
USA:
Peter Bettendorf
Bob Gravenor
Wm. Grimes
Steve Hawk
Rich Mortillaro
Ultra stereo
Consultant:
Bruce Murphy
Sound Re-recordists
George R. Groves Jr
Tim Philben
Troy Porter
**Post-production
Assistants**
Anthony Bank
Grady Cooper
Additional Interviews
Paul Bernhard
Toby Reisz
Research
Denise Gigante
Marie Snyder

**8,617 feet
96 minutes**

USA 1991

**Directors: Fax Bahr,
George Hickenlooper**

In February 1976, Francis Coppola begins filming in the Philippines on *Apocalypse Now*, adapted by John Milius from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. His wife Eleanor shoots documentary footage for the releasing company, United Artists, and also records conversations with her husband for use in her own diary. Coppola raises the money himself (with his personal property as collateral) and hires Marlon Brando for three weeks, at a million dollars a week, for the all-important role of Colonel Kurtz. Harvey Keitel, cast as Willard, is replaced after a week's shooting by Martin Sheen. In May 1976, torrential rains halt production, and when filming resumes in July the rigours of production increasingly convince Coppola that he has begun an irreversible journey into his own heart of darkness. Filming grinds to a halt when Marlon Brando arrives, and he and Coppola set about improvising an ending that will bring out the real significance of the story. After 238 days, filming is complete, and two-and-a-half years later, the film receives its première.

Two statements made by Francis Coppola at the outset set the agenda for everything that follows in this fascinating account of the making of *Apocalypse Now*. The first is his pronouncement at a Cannes Festival press conference, which represents what has become the 'official version' of his intentions: "My film is not about Vietnam. It is Vietnam... We were in the jungle. There were too many of us. We had access to too much money, too much equipment, and little by little we went insane". The second shows Coppola without the trappings of microphones, interpreters, or much in the way of clothes, gesticulating wildly from his director's chair somewhere in the jungle as he explains *Apocalypse Now* in rather different terms: "The movie I'm making is not in the tradition of the great Max Ophuls, or David Lean even. This movie was made in the tradition of Irwin Allen. I made the most vulgar, entertaining, exciting, actionful, sense-o-ramic, new-thrill-every-five-minutes...because I want people to come and see it".

There's not necessarily a contradiction between these two positions, just a switch of emphasis between what one might call the public and the private Coppola. The latter was captured in documentary footage shot on location by his wife Eleanor, and originally intended as a promotional featurette for United Artists (though it apparently includes

some revelations so private that Coppola didn't know they were being taped). However, the distinction does build through the film into a picture of a peculiarly schizophrenic enterprise – and not just the enterprise of *Apocalypse Now*, but the whole Romantic phase of auteur-worship combined with the Movie Brat takeover of Hollywood, which gives us Francis Coppola as cultural hero/adventurer and old-time studio mogul rolled into one.

What Coppola did for Vietnam may seem particularly a product of the 'New Hollywood', but it's interesting that it also has its art-house equivalent. Before *Hearts of Darkness* there was *Burden of Dreams*, Les Blank's film about the making of Werner Herzog's *Fitzcarraldo*, which documented similar phenomena: the 'progressive' film-maker recreating a colonialist exploit and himself becoming a mini-colonial force in the process; the heroic auteur who not only shuns the studio for the real world but subjects himself to the same physical challenges and dangers that his film is about. On this score, the subject of *Hearts of Darkness* is rather more self-aware than that of *Burden of Dreams*: where Herzog plays the romantic-obsessive artist to the hilt, Coppola is conscious of all the Hollywood baggage he brings with him into the jungle.

In fact, there's very little irony in this documentary perspective on *Apocalypse Now* that hasn't already occurred to, and been exploited by, the people making *Apocalypse Now*. It comes with the territory, as it were, the movie-buff knowingness that is already evident in that diminuendo from "the great Max Ophuls" to "David Lean even". The only irony that Coppola can't see, of course, has to do with the personal crisis that his double role throws him into. He has succeeded in making the whole world his studio, in a way undreamt of by any old-time mogul, but where in the end product is its meaning for him as an auteur-artist-hero? What really is *Apocalypse Now* about?, is the question that is pursued with desperate, flailing energy through *Hearts of Darkness*. It results in Coppola retreating to California at one point during production to work out his "personal vision", and explains why the switch between the Coppola of the press conference and the defensive Irwin Allen in the jungle becomes such a schizoid split.

Coppola's plight is summarised, with touching wistfulness, when he is asked if he ever thought of abandoning the project. As both the money man behind the film and the artist trapped within it, that, of course, was impossible: "What could I say, 'Francis, I quit'?"

Richard Combs

Hot Shots!

Certificate
12
Distributor
20th Century Fox
Production Company
20th Century Fox
Executive Producer
Pat Proft
Producer
Bill Badalato
Associate Producers
Stephen McEveety
Janet Graham
Greg Norberg
**Production
Associates**
Jim Deck
Rocco Marra
**Production
Co-ordinator**
Shari Leibowitz
**Unit Production
Manager**
Stephen McEveety
Location Managers
Michael J. Burmeister
Ron Carr
**Post-production
Supervisor**
Carol Dantuono
2nd Unit Director
Ernie Orsatti
Casting
Mali Finn
Extras:
The Casting Group
Voice:
Barbara Harris
Celebrity:
Ron Smith's Celebrity
Look-A-Likes
Assistant Directors
Tom Davies
Matthew Rowland
Sean Hobin
Screenplay
Jim Abrahams
Pat Proft
**Director of
Photography**
Bill Butler
Colour
CFI
**Animation
Photography**
Robert Maine
Matte Photography
Brian Adams
**Director of Aerial
Photography**
Paul "Doc" Byrd
Camera Operators
Michael Stone
2nd Unit:
Geno Salvatori
Optical:
Marlo Pabon
Kris Gregg
Aerial:
Nick A. Alvarado
Bill Kelly
**Special Visual
Effects**
Dreamquest Images
Visual Effects
Executive Producer:
Keith Shartle
Producer:
Robert Stodd
Co-ordinators:
Erik Henry
Beth Brown
Supervisors:
Mat Beck
John T. Van Vliet
Katherine Kean
Editor:
Jody Rogers
**Optical
Supervisors:**
Jeff Matakovich
Beverly Bernacki
Co-ordinator:
Daniel J. Lombardo
Line-up:
Dennis Dorney
Matte Artist
Robert Scifo
**Animation
Supervisor:**
Jeff Burks
Department Manager:
Anjelica Casillas
Art Work:
Nina Salerno
Animator
Tanya Wilson

Rotoscope Supervisor
James Valentine

Motion Control Supervisors
Scott Beattie
Kevin Fitzgerald

Bluescreen Supervisor
Richard Johnson

Duck Animatronics
Chris Walas

CWI Project Supervisor
John Berg

Editors
Jane Kurson
Eric Sears

Production Designer
William A. Elliott

Art Director
Greg Papalia

Set Design
James R. Bayliss
John Dexter
Yvonne Garnier-Hackl

Set Decorator
Jerie Kelter

Set Dressers
G. Roger Abell
Glenn "Spanky" Roberts
Douglas D. Sieck
On-set:
John P. Bankson

Production Illustrator
Marc Baird

Storyboard Illustrator
Alan Hoffman

Special Effects Co-ordinator
Phil Cory

Special Effects Foreman
Ray Svedin

Special Effects
Steve Galich
David L. Simmons
Hans Metz
Gary Cruise
Jeffrey A. Frink
Jeff Denes
Richard Cory
Thomas Delgenio
Karyn Alexander
James W. Thompson
Animation/Opticals:
Available Light Ltd

Models
Head:
Jack Sessums
Shop Supervisor:
David Goldberg
Shop Foreman:
Ken Swenson
Crew:
Greg Tracer
Chuck Welch
Dave Humpert

Miniature Effects
Sessums Engineering
Unit Director/Director
of Photography:
Michael O. Sajbel
Unit Producer:
Gary R. Maxwell

Pyrotechnician
Ray Oberg

Music
Sylvester Levay

Music Editor
Ted Whitfield

Choreography
Lester Wilson

Costume Design
Mary Malin

Costume Supervisor
Mark Peterson

Costumers
Melissa Berry
Laurel Frushour
Melissa Merwin
Lewis G. Richard
Joe Allegro
Janis Merkaelian

Make-up
Design:
Ann Lee Masterson
Charlie Sheen:
David Anderson
Artists:
Wade Alan Daily
Cindy Williams



Mainstream path: Lloyd Bridges

Special Make-up Effects

Makeup & Effects Lab
John R. Fifer
Douglas J. White
Allan A. Apone
Mark Maitre
Title Design
Phill Norman
Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title
Sound Design/Supervision
Sandy Berman
Randle Akerson
Sound Editors
David B. Cohn
Susan Dudeck
Scott A. Hecker
Bob Newlan
Marvin Walowitz
Karen G. Wilson
Donlee Jorgensen
Bruce Lacey
Phil Linson

Supervising ADR Editor

Lauren Palmer
ADR Editor
Renee Tondelli
Foley Editors
Mark Pappas
David Williams
Sound Recordists
Thomas Causey
Matthew Patterson
Music:
Armin Steiner
ADR Recordists
Charleen Richards
Randy Piotroski
Foley Recordists
Greg Orloff
Randy Singer
Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordists

Kevin O'Connell
Rick Kline
Sound Effects Recordist
John Paul Fasal
Foley Artists
Dan O'Connell
Alicia Stevenson
Technical Adviser
Kenton "Chip" Steger

Production Assistants

Pablo Prietto
Jason Badalato
Joy Frelinghuysen
Susan Prince
Matt Rebenkoff
Jori Jokelainen
John Iacoviello
Post-production:
Chris Coombs
Aerial:
Phil Bautista
Phil Stewart
Scott Lockwood
Aerial Set:
Peggy Hughes
Stunt Co-ordinator
Ernie Orsatti
Stunt Double
Charlie Sheen:
Eddie Braun

Flying Sequences Director

Richard T. Stevens
Aerial Unit Manager
Billy Badalato
Aerial Co-ordinators
Skip Holm
Technical:
Al Gerbino
Production:
Lonnie Kragel
Pilots
Skip Holm
Chuck Thornton
Charles Johnston
Brent Barker
Paul Mets
Animal Handlers
David Allsberry
Michael Boyle
Film Extract
Flight of the Intruder
(1978)

Cast

Charlie Sheen
Sean "Topper" Harley/
Rhett Butler/
Superman
Cary Elwes
Kent Gregory
Valeria Golino
Ramada Thompson/
Scarlet O'Hara/
Lois Lane
Lloyd Bridges
Admiral Benson
Kevin Dunn
Lieutenant
Commander Block
Jon Cryer
Jim "Wash Out"
Pfaffenbach
William O'Leary
Pete "Dead Meat"
Thompson
Kristy Swanson
Kowalski
Efrem Zimbalist Jr
Wilson
Bill Irwin
Buzz Harley
Heidi Swedberg
Mrs "Dead Meat"
Thompson
Bruce A. Young
"Red" Herring

Ryan Stiles
"Mailman" Farnham
Rino Thunder
Owatonna
"The Old One"
Mark Arnott
Rosener
Ryan Cutrona
Captain Margolis
Don Lake
Doctor
Kelly Connell
Air Controller
Tony Simotes
Ambulance Driver
Don Luce
Paramedic
Judith Kahan
Nurse
Jeff Bright
Communications
Officer
Jimmy Lennon Jr
Ring Announcer
Marie Thomas
Francine the Secretary
Marc Shaiman
Piano Player
Cylik Cozart
Christopher J. Keene
Drill Sergeants
Ryan Fitzgerald
Scooter
Ed Herschlar
Rabbi
Jimmie Ray Weeks
Amish Man
Annie O'Donnell
Amish Woman
Mack Yamaguchi
Eskimo
Charles Barkley
Charles Barkley
Bill Laimbeer
Bill Laimbeer
Gene Greytak
Pope John Paul II
Tony Lorea
Humphrey "Bogie"
Bogart
Jerry Halera
Saddam Hussein
Bob Lenz
Elvis "The King"
Presley
Willie Collins
Liberace
Robert Puro
Precocious Paperboy
Richard Lasting
Handsome Milkman
Elston Ridgle
Max Jones
Boxers
Chris Doyle
Conspiratorial
Crewman
Pablo Prietto
John Bankson
Parking Valets
Gary Brayboy
Al Clegg
Kevin Eads
Richard Emanuel
Brent Freeman
Craig McIntosh
Tony Moreno
David Oliver
Kip Pierce
Sean Wright
Sleepy Weasel
Squadron

7,618 feet
85 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Jim Abrahams

● Air Commander James Block calls on Sean "Topper" Harley to enlist him in a select flying corps with a very special mission. Topper is a young, brilliant pilot, but a renegade with psychological problems. Grounded after writing off a \$30 million plane, he is living in isolation with an Indian tribe, and now goes by the name "Fluffy Bunny Feet". On the advice of an elder, he returns to the white world, and takes his place in Block's crack team, alongside the egotistical Kent Gregory, Pete "Dead Meat" Thompson, and Jim "Wash Out" Pfaffenbach.

Kent bears Topper a grudge: their fathers died in a plane crash, and Harley senior was blamed for the accident. The mere mention of the disgrace is enough to traumatise Topper, who has his father's eyes – literally, in his pocket. Ramada, the beautiful camp psychiatrist, doubts Topper's reliability for the mission, but is attracted to him personally. Their relationship is complicated by the fact that Kent is Ramada's former lover.

Operation Sleepy Weasel is nominally headed by Admiral "Tug" Benson, but in the light of his senility, Commander Block pulls the strings. The mission involves a bombing raid on a Mediterranean nuclear plant, or failing that, an accordion factory. Secretly, Block and representatives of an arms firm plan for the mission to fail, ensuring a new round of high defence spending. Unconsciously, Topper is an integral part of their strategy.

Aboard the "SS Essesses", Block briefs his pilots: Topper is to lead the attack, a choice which even shocks him. By wilfully bringing up the past, Block triggers Topper's trauma, but when the doomed mission encounters enemy resistance, he realises that the arms manufacturers have been double-dealing. In the nick of time, the commander tells Topper

the truth about his father: he was a hero who died an honourable death. Topper regains his composure, and in an outstanding display of skill and courage sees off the enemy fighters and completes the mission. Having won the admiration of Kent and the love of Ramada, he limps home in an engineless, wingless plane.

● Fighter planes manoeuvre on the deck of an aircraft carrier, imposing silhouettes against roseate skies – Jim Abrahams' new film takes off *Top Gun* even before the opening credits. No sooner is this frame of reference established, however, than a navy officer is ringing the doorbell on a tepee and enlisting the help of "Fluffy Bunny Feet", as gone-native flyboy Topper Harley is now calling himself. Kevin Costner's Oscar-winning Western certainly merits a satiric swipe, but this is a clumsy joke, typical of Abrahams' hit-and-miss style, his impatience with any defined context, and a tendency to let an allusion – it probably goes without saying, a Hollywood allusion – do the work of a joke.

Those inspired, corrective jokes about movie-making technique in the early films of Abrahams and his collaborators Jerry and David Zucker have subsided as they have become more proficient behind the camera. Whatever the lunacy on the screen, the director doesn't trouble the surface, or pull the rug out from under his audience the way he used to do. Now that the ZAZ team have taken their separate paths into the mainstream (Jerry most successfully with *Ghost*, Abrahams less so with *Big Business* and *Welcome Home Roxy Carmichael*), there isn't much conviction in the parody; indeed parody is slipping towards pastiche. The co-writer here, Pat Proft, scripted the first *Police Academy*, and it is conceivable that, like benevolent parasites, he and Abrahams could go on churning out these diverting throwaway spoofs forever – or until they get their own *Ghost*.

Tom Charity



Untroubling lunacy

The Indian Runner

Certificate
15
Distributor
Columbia TriStar
Production Company
The Mount Film Group
In association with Mico/NHK Enterprises
Executive Producers
Thom Mount
Stephen K. Rannon
Mark Bisgeier
Producer
Don Phillips
Co-producer
Patricia Morrison
Line Producer
David S. Hamburger
Production
Co-ordinators
Maureen Osborne-Beall
Winter Unit:
Mary Cay Hollander
Production Manager
David S. Hamburger
Deer Unit Supervisor
Doug Seus
Location Manager
Lawrence Banks
Additional:
Lori Balton
Boyd Wilson
Post-production Co-ordinator
Sato Masuzawa
Casting
Deede Wehle
Extras:
Jackie Beavers
Assistant Directors
Artist Robinson
John Wildermuth
Eric Haller
Winter Unit:
Frank Kostenko
Screenplay
Sean Penn
Inspired by the Song "Highway Patrolman" by Bruce Springsteen
Director of Photography
Anthony B. Richmond
Colour
DeLuxe
Aerial Photography
Frank Holgate
Camera Operators
Buzz Feitshans
2nd Unit:
Andy Anderson
Deer Unit:
Russ Lyster
Video Playback Operators
David Katz
Pete Martinez
Editors
Jay Cassidy
Additional:
Phil Linson
Production Designer
Michael Haller
Art Director
Bill Groom
Set Decorator
Derek Hill
Set Dresser
Bud Hill
Special Effects
Gary Elemendorf
Music
Jack Nitzsche
Music Performed by
Bass Guitar:
Tim Drummond
Soloist:
David Lindley
Music Co-producer
Michael Hoenig
Music Supervisor
Danny Bramson
Music Editor
Richard Whitfield
Songs
"Feelin' Alright"
by Dave Mason,
performed by Traffic;
"Comin' Back to Me"
by Marty Balin,
performed by
Jefferson Airplane;
"Fresh Air" by Jesse
Oris Farrow,

performed by
Quicksilver Messenger
Service; "Couch" by
Eric Haller, performed
by Eric Haller, Bret
Haller, Craig Levitz;
"Red Texas Sunset"
by Bud McGuire,
performed by Paulette
Tyler; "Caballito
Chontaleno" by
Camilo Zapata,
performed by Grupo
"Rio Rojo" (Estelli);
"Green River" by John
C. Fogarty, performed
by Creedence
Clearwater Revival;
"Brothers for Good"
by Eric Haller,
performed by Eric
Haller, Bret Haller;
"Summertime" by
George Gershwin,
Du Bose Heyward,
performed by Janis
Joplin, Big Brother
& the Holding
Company; "I Shall
Be Released" by Bob
Dylan, performed
by The Band
Costume Design
Jill Ohannesson
Wardrobe
Supervisor:
Shari Griffin
Set:
Jemma Scarisbrick
Make-up
Supervisor:
Hallie D'Amore
Additional:
Nancy Glissman
Winter Unit
Supervisor:
Dan Striepeke
Special Make-up Artist
Jo-anne Smith-Ojeil
Title Design
David Aaron
Titles/Opticals
Cinema Research
Corporation
Supervising Sound Editor
James J. Klinger
Sound Editor
Jack Kirschner
ADR/Foley Editor
Jas Klinger
ADR Group
Co-ordinator
Allison Caine
Sound Recordists
Gary Alper
Mark "Frito" Long
ADR Recordists
Robert Deschaine
Charleen Richards
Dolby stereo
Consultant:
Douglas Greenfield
Sound Re-recordists
Mike Minkler
Greg Landaker
Foley Walkers
Keith Olsen
Robert Friedman
Production Assistants
Set:
Sato Masuzawa
Key:
Bob Loeser
Office:
Debra Ginsberg
Joe Fogarty
Stunt Co-ordinator
Jeff Jensen
Stunt Doubles
Andy Armstrong
Corey Eubanks
Stand-ins
Shane Kerwin
Maritha Karlsson
Jeff Mirowski
Susan Slominski-
Caster
Helicopter Pilot
Cress Horne
Film Extract
Rio Grande (1950)

Cast
David Morse
Joe Roberts
Viggo Mortensen
Frank Roberts
Valeria Golino
Maria Roberts
Patricia Arquette
Dorothy
Charles Bronson
Father
Sandy Dennis
Mother
Dennis Hopper
Caesar
Jordan Rhodes
Randall
Enzo Rossi
Raffael
Harry Crews
Mr Baker
Eileen Ryan
Mrs Baker
Trevor Endicott
Joe age 12
Brandon Fleck
Frank age 7
Kathy Jensen
Lady at Car Wash
Jim Devney
Deputy
Dr Leland J. Olson
Doctor
Annie Pearson
Fat Woman
Thomas Blair Levin
Clyde
V. Stacy Klein
Lucy
Benicio del Toro
Miguel
James J. Luxa
Randall's Partner
Adam Nelson
Cellmate
Eddie Katz
Guy on Commode
Kenny Stabler
Indian Runner
Don Shanks
Young Indian Runner
Neal Stark
Circus Midget
Elaine Schoonover
Bearded Lady
Larry Hoefling
Larry
Phil Gould
Man at Del Mar
Chuck Ulmer
Frank's Boss
Joe Martin
Dorothy's Father
Helen Halmes
Dorothy's Mother
Jimmy Intveld
Kid on Highway

11.364 feet
126 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Sean Penn

Plattsmouth, Nebraska, 1968.
After a snow-bound car chase, Sheriff Joe Roberts shoots and kills a man in self-defence, later suffering terrible remorse. Joe's brother Frank returns from Vietnam, and visits Joe and his Mexican wife Maria before leaving town on a freight train. Six months later, following their mother's death, Joe traces Frank to a nearby jail, and sees him being released and reunited with his girlfriend Dorothy.

Back home, Joe enjoys a family dinner with his father, and they discuss the loss of Joe's farm to entrepreneurs. When their father later commits suicide, Frank is contacted but refuses to come to the funeral. Later, a pregnant and distressed Dorothy turns up at Joe's house; Frank is tracked down to a seedy motel and brought home by his brother. He takes a construction job and agrees to marry Dorothy.

One night, however, he becomes enraged during dinner, spits food at Dorothy, and hurries to a bar where he assaults a patron. When Dorothy goes into labour, Frank is again missing. Joe traces him to the bar where a heated argument ends in Joe lacerating his hand, bleeding on to the bar and declaring: "That there is family". Later, Frank kills Caesar the barman when he attempts to wipe away the blood. Driving off into the night, Frank is pursued by Joe, who has a vision of his brother as a little boy while back home Dorothy gives birth. Giving up finally on his brother, Joe turns towards home.

Inspired by the Bruce Springsteen song "Highway Patrolman" (from the introspective *Nebraska* album), *The Indian Runner* has all the hallmarks of an authentic late 60s/early 70s period piece: lengthy, semi-improvised, soul-searching conversations, punctuated with atmospheric footage of the grimy towns and barren fields of Nebraska, and accompanied throughout by the plaintive twanging of acoustic guitars. Also present and correct are the obligatory mystical elements, centred on an Indian deer-hunting legend which states that, after running a deer to ground, the hunter should inhale its dying breath to acquire its strength. Quite how this fits into Penn's anguished tale of brotherly conflict and cultural displacement is unclear. On the credit side, Charles Bronson turns in a fine cameo as the boys' father, and occasional moments of haunting intimacy suggest that, if reined in by a firm producer or editor, Penn might develop into a director to watch.

Mark Kermode

Liebestraum

Certificate
18
Distributor
UIP
Production Company
MGM
An Initial production
Producer
Eric Fellner
Co-producer
Michael Flynn
Production Co-ordinator
Ingrid Rudefors
Unit Production Manager
Chris Brigham
Location Manager
Annie Stewart
Post-production Supervisor
Virginia Allan
2nd Unit Director
Waldemar Kalinowski
Casting
Carrie Frazier
Shani Ginsberg
Deborah Brown
Associates:
Susan Shopmaker
Jessica Porter
Extras:
Susannah Berryman
Assistant Directors
Stephen Buck
Joseph R. Burns
2nd Unit:
Dan Burns
Screenplay
Mike Figgis
Director of Photography
Juan Ruiz Anchia
Colour
DuArt
2nd Unit Director of Photography
Andrea Dietrich
Camera Operator
Andrea Dietrich
Video Playback
Howard Wiener
Thomas Zafian
Editor
Martin Hunter
Production Designer
Waldemar Kalinowski
Art Director
Michael T. Perry
Set Design
David Lubin
Set Decorator
Florence Fellman
Set Dressers
Merle Oxman
On set:
Lisa Leone
Art Department Co-ordinator
Ross Aseron
Scenic Artists
Head:
Genevieve "Gigi" Lorick
Chris Delaney
Holly Fields
Karen Sorum
Storyboard Artist
Andrea Dietrich
Special Effects Co-ordinator
Steve Kirschhoff
Special Effects
Wilfred Caban
Richard Dowgin
Don Hewitt
David W. Howell
Dan Kirshoff
Denis A. Zack
Richie Solomon
Music
Mike Figgis
Music Extract
"Liebestraum, me"
by Franz Liszt
Music Performed by
Clarinet:
Tony Coe
Bass:
Laurence Cottle
Drums:
Ian Thomas
Music Producer
Austin Ince
Music Supervisor
Gemma Dempsey
Costume Design
Sharon Simonaire



Holed: Kevin Anderson, Pamela Gidley

Wardrobe

Supervisor:
Laura Goldsmith

Costumer

Patty Weintraub

Make-up

Key:

Tracey Gray

Special Make-up

Effects

Gordon Smith

Arlene Smith

Titles/Opticals

The Optical

Partnership

Supervising

Sound Editor

Michael Crouch

Sound Editors

Dialogue:

Peter Elliott

Additional:

John Ireland

Foley Editor

Len Tremble

Sound Recordist

John Pritchett

ADR Recordist

Tommy Goodwin

Sound Re-recordists

Hugh Strain

Production

Assistants

Daniel Burns

Steve Battaglia

Jacques Thelemaque

Heidi L. Wood

Office:

Patrick J. Burke

Robert P. Menasian

Eric S. Moyer

Ellie Mayhem

Stunt Co-ordinator

Jerry Hewitt

Stunts

Jerry Hewitt

Vincent Burns

Rich Dowgin

Roy Farfel

Stunt Doubles

Kevin Anderson:

Vincent Burns

Stand-ins

Pamela Gidley:

Lorie Blanding

Bill Pullman:

Steve Beach

Cast

Kevin Anderson

Nick Kaminsky

Pamela Gidley

Jane Kessler

Bill Pullman

Paul Kessler

Kim Novak

Mrs Anderssen

Graham Beckel

Sheriff Ricker

Zach Grenier

Barnett Ralston IV

Thomas Kopache

Dr Parker

Anne Lange

Harper Harris

Karen Sillas

Tracy Thorne

Nurses

Jack Wallace

Mike

Max Perlich

Hugh Hurd

Orderlies

Catherine Hicks

Mary Parker

Taina Elg

Old Mother Ralston

Tom McDermott

Night Porter

Joseph McKenna

Day Clerk

Joe Auferly

Buddy

Bill Raymond

Matt

Nola Mae Sanders

Maria

Lorie Blanding

Barmaid

Sarah Fearon

Young Mrs Munssen

Bernie Sheredy

Barnett Ralston III

Ian Rob Witt

Boy in Dream

Alicia Roanne Witt

Girl in Dream

Alberto Sanchez

Waiter at Party

Roger Howarth

Boy in Rain

Penny Jo White

Girl in Rain

Waldemar

Kalinowski

Butler

Lydia Radziul

Waitress

Joe Taylor

Ex-Boxer

Ele Keats

Actress in Soap Opera

Scott Garrison

Actor in Soap Opera

10,141 feet

113 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Mike Figgis

Architectural writer Nick Kaminsky arrives in Elderstown to meet his dying mother, Mrs Anderssen, from whom he was separated as a baby. A chance meeting with old college friend Paul Kessler (who is overseeing the demolition of the Ralston Department Store, a historic iron-framed building) proves fortuitous when Nick saves Paul from falling masonry. In gratitude, Paul grants Nick access to study the building. Following Paul's wife Jane's birthday party, Nick is taken to a brothel by psychotic police chief Pete Ricker. Next day, Paul suggests that Jane take photographs for Nick's article; that evening (in a drunken stupor) he reveals past infidelities to Nick and warns him not to touch Jane while he is away in Chicago.

After a day at the Ralston building, Nick drives to the Ralston Memorial Hospital with Jane, who reveals that she was adopted after a tragic accident killed her father and drove her mother insane. In the hospital, Mrs Anderssen recounts an incident in which her husband returned home with the "smell of cunt" on his fingers. After another session in the Ralston building, Jane tells Nick the department store was closed after Mr Ralston discovered his wife in *flagrante delicto* with a store hand: he shot both of them, then himself, but Mrs Ralston survived, brain-dead, and was installed at the newly opened Ralston Memorial hospital. A son (now adult) still lives in town.

Nick returns to the Ralston building in search of his hotel keys, and is startled by a vision of young Mr Ralston; he falls and is knocked unconscious. Next day, Jane takes Nick home where their lovemaking is interrupted by the maid. Nick learns from his mother's medical records that her married name used to be Munssen, the name of the man shot by old Mr Ralston. From local police files, Nick discovers a picture of Mr Munssen, whose striking likeness to Nick reveals him to be his father. Instructed by workmen to stay away from the Ralston building, Nick is visited in his hotel by Jane. He masturbates her but again they are interrupted; a phone call from the hospital announces that Mrs Anderssen is dying.

At the Ralston Memorial, Mrs Anderssen convulses when she "smells cunt" on Nick's fingers, while in the corridor Jane is confronted by the brain-dead Mrs Ralston. Jane and Nick return to the Ralston building where they make love. Paul, however, has returned early from Chicago and (while Mrs Anderssen dies) discovers the lovers in a post-coital sleep.

Flashbacks reveal the pregnant Mrs Anderssen to be the true murderer, having killed her own husband, and shot Mr and Mrs Ralston. Paul turns away, weeping.

This extraordinary third film by writer/composer/director Mike Figgis revolves around three themes which finally merge into one: the inevitability of fate, the persistence of the past, and the function of memory. Built on the foundation of an ominous and virtually uninterrupted score (which incorporates semi-audible growls and rumblings reminiscent of Ron Nagle's work on *The Exorcist*), *Liebestraum* lulls the viewer into a dreamlike state.

Harking back to classic ghost stories like *The Haunting of Hill House*, Figgis conjures a world in which the traumas of the past are re-created in the present through the agency of a 'living' building. The Ralston Department Store, an architectural landmark hated by the townsfolk for the bad memories it invokes, lures the viewer into a world of guilty pleasures and half-remembered dreams.

The power of reverie is central to Figgis' story, which suggests that the events depicted may be taking place in the tortured mind of the dying Mrs Anderssen. While she relives on her deathbed the sins of her past, the Ralston building spews up its own hidden secrets as the demolition team tear down its rotting walls. Significantly, in the scene in which Nick visits the Elderstown brothel (where vampiric prostitutes with lascivious mouths and clawing nails offer perverse pleasures), Figgis uses the same actresses to play the hookers as those who portray the nurses attending to Mrs Anderssen. By implication, the brothel scene could be a product of her twisted imagination.



Dreaming: Kim Novak

A number of leitmotifs become talismans which trigger memory. Music is the most obvious of these (Liszt's *Liebestraum* provides a haunting refrain), but there are others which are even more significant. For instance, Figgis captures a convincing sense of smell (that most powerful *aide memoire*) which is almost perceptible at times. During the brothel sequence, the "smell of cunt" is compellingly conjured as one prostitute inserts her fingers into her vagina and then thrusts them in Nick's face; it turns out to be this same smell that triggered Mrs Anderssen's act of violence, and it pervades the hospital room during her death throes. (The brothel sequence has been cut entirely from the US release version on the grounds that it was "too heavy" for mainstream audiences - an indication of its overwhelming power.)

Photography also plays a key metaphorical role: photographer Jane records the past and first recognises Nick from his photograph on a book jacket; Nick's estranged mother also tracks down her errant son through a publicity photograph; and it is police photographs which reveal to Nick the terrible truth about his parents.

Figgis' own photography in *Liebestraum* is particularly striking, bathing the screen in a brooding darkness splashed with deep reds and cold blues from which faces and shadows emerge briefly before sinking back into the depths. Repetitive fades to black also help to create an atmosphere of danger and impending doom. Just as the plot itself is riddled with black holes (is Jane actually Ralston's daughter?; does Paul finally shoot Jane and Nick?), so the visual imagery suggests a world of endless night from which dreams of the past will spill forever.

Mark Kermode



Excess controlled: Assumpta Serna...

Certificate

(Not yet issued)

Distributor

Metro

Production Company

Iberoamericana de TV

In association with

Televisión Española

With financial

assistance from

Ministerio de Cultura

Producer

Andrés Vicente Gómez

Production

Co-ordinators

Francisco Amaro

Juan Campos

Production Manager

Miguel Gómez

Assistant Directors

Rafael Moleón

Eusebio Graziani

Agustín Almodóvar

Carmen Martínez

Screenplay

Pedro Almodóvar

Screenplay

Collaborator

Jesús Ferrero

Story

Pedro Almodóvar

Director of

Photography

Angel Luis Fernández

In colour

Camera Operators

Angel Gomez

Rafael Castro

Video Operator

Javier Trueba

Editor

Jorge Salcedo

Art Directors

Roman Arango

José Morales

José Rosell

Set Decorator

Fernando Sánchez

Special Effects

Reyes Abade

Music

Bernardo Bonazzi

Orchestrations

Manuel Santisteban

Song

"Espérame en

el cielo, corazón"

performed by Mina

Costume Design

José María Cossío

Wardrobe

Assumpta Serna:

Francis Montesinos

Angeles Boada

Eva Cobo

Francis Montesinos

Angela Arregui Duo

Eusebio Poncela:

Antonio Alvarado

Cornejo

Make-up

Juan Pedro Hernández

Sound Recordists

Bernardo Orthion

Tino Azores

Production

Assistants

Esther García

Juan G. Sempere

Manuel Moxo

José Carlos Barranco

Cast

Assumpta Serna

María Cardenal

Antonio Banderas

Angel Gimenez

Nacho Martínez

Diego Montes

Eva Cobo

Eva

Julietta Serrano

Berta

Chus Lampreave

Pilar

Carmen Maura

Julia

Eusebio Poncela

Police Inspector

Bibi Andersen

Flower Vendor

Luis Ciges

Guard

Eva Siva

Diego and María's

Cleaning Woman

Verónica Forqué

Journalist

Pepa Merino

María's Secretary

Lola Peno

Marisa Tejada

Mercedes Jiménez

Francesca Romana

Students

Jesús Ruyman

Milton Diaz

Men

Jaime Chavari

Priest

Marcelo G. Flores

Agustín Almodóvar

Policemen

Concha Hidalgo

Tata Angel

Angie Gray

Chica Ana

Alicia Mora

Laly Salas

Kika

Juan Sánchez

Nurse

Kike Turmix

Julián Sánchez

Men Fighting

Antonio Passy

9,584 feet

106 minutes

Subtitles

Spain 1986

Director: Pedro Almodóvar

Diego Montes, a bullfighter forced into early retirement through injury, runs a bullfighting school. He finds sexual solace in sadistic videotapes. Lawyer María Cardenal is a long-time fan of his. She seduces men whom she then kills at the point of orgasm, matador-style, with a long hairpin. Among Diego's pupils is Angel Gimenez, who suffers from vertigo and faints at the sight of blood. He lives with his mother, a fervent member of *Opus Dei*. Diego's fashion model lover Eva lives nearby with her mother Pilar.

To prove to Diego that he is not homosexual, Angel rapes Eva one evening. He later confesses to the police but Eva and her mother refuse to press charges. Angel then confesses to the murder of four men, killed mysteriously with a long pin. The detective is sceptical. María Cardenal is appointed to defend Angel and police psychiatrist Julia is also put on the case. On leaving Angel's apartment, María glimpses Diego in his car. The two find themselves in a cinema watching the last moments of *Duel in the Sun*. They return to his house where they embrace, but María fumbles and drops her pin. Meanwhile, Julia learns that Angel is subject to trances during which he is able to see the crimes that are committed in the city.

When the detective discovers the bodies of two women in the grounds of Diego's house, María becomes aware that Diego is a killer. She takes him to her cottage, arranged as a shrine to his prowess in the ring. They realise they are destined for each other. Diego breaks off his relationship with Eva but, hoping to change his mind, Eva hides in his house. There she overhears him and María admitting their guilt. She, Julia, Angel and the detective, goaded by Angel's foreseeing of twin deaths, set out to apprehend María and Diego. As they make for Diego's house, they are overtaken by an eclipse of the sun. A shot rings out. They find Diego and María Cardenal dead, united in the act of love.

Almodóvar's *Matador*, made the year before *Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*, is definitely not the "kinky comedy of sex fantasies...lush and clownish excess..." that Pauline Kael, writing in the *New Yorker*, suggested. Excess and sexual fantasy are certainly present, but under tight control and not used frivolously.

The dark tone is set in the bleak opening sequence by the bleached-out images on the sadistic videotapes which Diego watches, armchair drawn up close, feet either side of the

screen as he masturbates. The 'excess' consists in the determinedly uncoy approach to scenes of sexual violence, in the glossy fashion-magazine style, and in the profligate use of cinematic references.

The character of Angel, whose name connotes his narrative role, is reminiscent of the intruder in Pasolini's *Theorem*, while the continual references to the imminent eclipse conjures Antonioni's *L'eclisse*, and the death of Diego and María recalls the twinning of sexual pleasure and death in *Ai no corrida*. The scene in which Diego and María watch the final sequence of *Duel in the Sun* is also emblematic, implicating cinema itself in their fascination with voyeurism, sex and death.

There is no novelty in using the rituals of the bullring to symbolise machismo, but Almodóvar lethally drives home the implications for each of the characters. Angel's rape of Eva clearly stems from the bullfighting code, and María, with her 'temple' to Diego's bullring exploits and her matador-style despatching of her lover-victims, is also in thrall to it.

Like Buñuel, Almodóvar chips away at the surface elegance of the bourgeoisie to expose its private vices. Diego and María's decadence is seen to contaminate the other characters, as when Eva, Diego's model-girlfriend, has to parade on the catwalk, the scar acquired during her rape not disguised but emphasised by make-up.

The effect of the graphic sequences of sexual killing is less to encourage identification with Angel's psychic pain, vulnerable as he is, with his 'X-ray vision', to the sins of the world, or with the rational detective, than with Diego and María's amoral acts of fetishism, which are as seductive as they are reprehensible. Despite this moral equivocation, Almodóvar's directorial fluency and daring in *Matador* confirm him as the most interesting and exciting film-maker working in Spain today.

Verina Glaessner



...Carmen Maura, Antonio Banderas



Uninfectious: Charlotte Gainsbourg, Anouk Grinberg...

Certificate

18

Distributor

Artificial Eye

Production

Companies

Ciné Valse/Film par

Film/Orly Film/DD

Productions/Sédif/

Films A2

With the

participation of

Canal Plus/Sofiarpi/

Investimage 2 et 3

Producer

Bernard Marescot

Production

Co-ordinator

Jacqueline Ben Loulou

Production Manager

Gilles Loutfi

Casting

Gérard Moulevrier

Extras:

Alberte Garo

Pascale Beraud

Assistant Directors

Luc Goldenberg

Philippe Chapus

Hiromi Rollin

2nd Unit:

Frédéric Auburtin

Screenplay

Bertrand Blier

Director of

Photography

Philippe Rousselot

Part in colour

Camera Operator

Myriam Touze

Steadicam Operator

Marc Konincks

Editor

Claudine Merlin

Art Director

Théobald Meurisse

Sets

Philippe Jeanjean

Jacques Moileaux

Jacques

Albertleguillon

Special Effects

Ralph Salis

Georges Demetrau

Philippe Hubin

Music Extracts

"Three Truths",

"Labyrinth",

"What Time Is Grey",

"City Walk",

"Screens of Memory",

"Façades", "Closing",

"Metamorphosis 2"

by Philip Glass;

"Musica Ricercata"

by György Ligeti;

"Piano Sonata No.

11" by Ludwig Van

Beethoven;

"Piano Concerto

No.2 in F Minor"

by Frédéric Chopin;

"Dixit Dominus"

by Antonio Vivaldi;

"Preludio sinfonico",

"Capriccio sinfonico"

by Giacomo Puccini;

"Harp Concerto"

by François Adrien

Boieldieu

Songs

"The Dream Police"

by David Byrne,

performed by Talking

Heads; "Lullaby"

performed by Dean

Martin; "Le Bon Dieu"

by Jacques Brel;

"Marie tu m'as" by

Jean Marie Aerts, Arno

Hintjens, M.C. Virgin,

performed by Marie

Thumas; "Lonesome

Zorro", "Whoop That

Thing" by Jean Marie

Aerts, Arno Hintjens,

M.C. Virgin

Costume Design

Jacqueline Bouchard

Costumers

Pierre-Yves Gayraud

Anne David

Gil Noir

Make-up

Joël Lavau

Sound Editor

Stephanie Granel

Sound Recordist

Pierre Gamet

Dolby stereo

Sound Re-recordist

Paul Bertault

Post-synchronisation

Jacques Lévy

Michel Bourlier

Jean-Louis Lebras

Sound Effects

Jean-Pierre Lelong

Subtitles

A. Whitelaw

W. Byron

Cast

Charlotte

Gainsbourg

Camille

Anouk Grinberg

Joëlle

Gérard Depardieu

Marc Antoine

Michel Blanc

Young Father

Jean Carmet

Old father

Catherine Jacob

Young Mother

Thierry Fremont

François

François Perrot

Didier Benureau

Directors

Jean-Louis

Trintignant

Jürgen Mash

Officers

Christianne Jean

Marc Antoine's Wife

Annie Girardot

Mother

Jean Rougerie

Forensic Surgeon

Jacques Seiler

The Inspector

Stéphane Boucher

Dominique Ratonnat

Journalists

François Gamard

Jean-Pierre Gos

Frédéric Darie

Policemen

Marion Laine

Odile Cohen

Fabienne Tricottet

Nurses

René Remblier

Property Man

Jacques Chailleux

Driver

Guy Louret

Labourer

Eric Prat

Strong Patient

Yves Renier

Watchman

Jacques Boudet

Depositor

Michel Berto

Banker

Philippe Clevonot

Producer

Laurence Guerre

Daughter

Anouk Ferjac

Mother

Eric Denize

Houseman

Yves Boonen

Bruno Abraham

Kremer

Bernard Nissile

Pierre Aussedat

Alain Sachs

Jean-Michel Noiret

Patients

Marc Zammit

Assistant

Olivier Mazoyer

Blond Manager

Eric Thomas

Alphonse

Laurent Gamelon

Brother-in-Law

Philippe Cal

Non-commissioned

Officer

Jean-Michel Dupuis

Lorry Driver

Béatrice Bertrand

Dresser

Claude Aufaure

Manager

Serge Barbagallo

Bridegroom

Maria Pitarresi

Bride

Isabelle de Botton

Mother of the Bride

Vincent Grass

Claude Barichasse

Maxime Lombard

10,624 feet

118 minutes

Subtitles

France 1991

Director: Bertrand Blier

● A young woman, Joëlle, is slapped senseless during an argument with a man and left lying in the road. Another young woman, Camille, who is pushing a shopping trolley full of seagulls, finds her and helps bring her round. The two become friends. They approach a man who is working in a nearby apartment and proceed to seduce him in the back of a car. Joëlle is evidently experienced in the art, while Camille loses her virginity in the incident. It becomes clear that they are on a film set. From now on, the story vacillates between films-within-the-film.

Most of the men in the local town have fallen prey to a highly contagious sexual disease, and detectives are looking for the cause. The promiscuous Joëlle is identified as the culprit – she is in league with the local doctor Marc Antoine, who is seeking to establish his importance in the town by encouraging the spread of the disease. The story goes back in time again. Camille's hen-pecked father is attempting to seduce his wife, who refuses to let him touch her. Camille appears, and after explaining who she is, urges him to make love to her mother, promising Joëlle to him as a reward sometime in the future.

The scene switches to another film-within-the-film, set in the Nazi era. Joëlle is told she has a mysterious "serious illness". She is hauled away by Nazi soldiers on a train full of shivering, naked passengers. They are commanded to leave the train and are shot dead, despite the insistence of the film's producer that the shots are blank. Finally, Joëlle finds herself in a car on a family outing; her mother is trying to convince her that life can be good. Meanwhile, her father defecates in his wheelchair. His family leave him alone next to the car.

● In *Merci la vie*, Bertrand Blier confronts with typical panache an age-old dilemma: how to shock the audience without sacrificing cinema's unique capacity to stir the emotions. Sadly, he comes nowhere near a satisfactory resolution. The 'plot', relating to love, friendship, sex, disease and death, stubbornly refuses to settle into a coherent structure. It is difficult to tell which scenes belong to which film-within-the-film, which period they take place in, and whether they are 'real'. In the end, we simply cease to care.

Blier's solution to the emotional detachment caused by the shifts in time, stories and mood is to manufacture scenes of such stark simplicity (and in some cases, horror) that we are shaken out of any

complacency arising from the film's funnier moments. Blier is well aware that the comic potential of a young woman who loves sex so much that she infects half the town's population with a disease is, these days, strictly limited. Similarly, the baroque farce of a Second World War French Resistance melodrama turns sinister as soon as we are confronted with the summary execution of trainloads of helpless, naked victims on the whim of a young Nazi officer.

"What period are we in?" cries the confused Joëlle at one point. "If there is AIDS, there should be no Nazis, and if there are Nazis there should be no AIDS". In one brief moment, we are transported back to the First World War, "An era where you can make love without catching a fatal disease"; but that age had its own insane methods of mass slaughter. The mock innocence of the scene could be an ironic joke – or it could be a naive statement of nostalgia.

Intellectually adroit though the film is, it fails to captivate. Scenes which have the potential to become poignant, such as Camille's trip back in time to help her oppressed father, degenerate into surrealism or slapstick before there is time to become involved. What Blier calls the "telescoping of genres" (road movie, thriller, *comédie fantastique*), the mixture of colour and black-and-white, the eclectic chic of the soundtrack (David Byrne, Philip Glass, Chopin, Dean Martin), and even the knowing sarcasm of the title, are all too self-conscious and insubstantial.

Anouk Grinberg and Charlotte Gainsbourg deliver fine performances, while Gérard Depardieu rants and raves and Michel Blanc conveys much pathos but little dignity. In the end, they are upstaged by Blier's determination to push to the limit his conception of cinematic engagement. Perhaps the film says more about modern French cinema than anything else; the gulf between Godardian irony and the warmth of a Truffaut seems as unbridgeable as ever.

Peter Aspden



...Gérard Depardieu

Certificate
(Not yet issued)
Distributor
Palace Pictures
Production Companies
Odyssey/Cinecom International
A Mirabi Films production
In association with Movieworks
Executive Producer
Cherie Rodgers
Producers
Michael Nozik
Mira Nair
Co-producer
Mitch Epstein
Associate Producer
Lydia Dean Pilcher
Production Co-ordinator
Thomas Vranesich
Unit Production Manager
Lydia Dean Pilcher
Locations
Maida Morgan
Unit Manager
Eve Silvester
Post-production Supervisor
Susan Lazarus
Casting
Mississippi: Judy Claman
New York: Simon/Kumin Casting
Uganda: Dinaz Stafford
London: Susie Figgis
India: Uma Da Cunha
Assistant Directors
Michael Zimbrich
Noga Isackson
Dinaz Stafford
Linda Wilson
Screenplay
Soonie Taraporevala
Director of Photography
Ed Lachman
In colour
Steadicam Operator
Ted Churchill
Editor
Roberto Silvi
Associate Editor
Tula Goenka
Production Designer
Mitch Epstein
Art Director
Jefferson Sage
Set Decorator
Jeanette Scott
Set Dressers
Cedric Johnson
David Weathers
Ameeta Nanji
Art Department Co-ordinator
Tracy Heather Strain
Scenic Artist
Jennifer DeBell
Music
L. Subramaniam
Music Performed by
Violin, Violin
Synthesizers,
Percussion:
L. Subramaniam
Percussion:
Emil Richards
Ewi:
Nyle Steiner
Acoustic, Electric
Guitar:
Thom Rotella
Piano, Synthesizers:
Freddie Ravel
Bass:
Jerry Watts Jnr
Drums:
Andrea Marcelli
Harmonica:
Ron Kalina
West African
Percussion:
Kobla Ladzekpo
African Music
Ensemble

Ugandan Percussion:
James Makubuya
Tabla:
Sattar Tari
Mridangam, Ghatam:
Vinod R.
Venkataraman
Electric Guitar:
Andy Summers
Vocal, Tambura:
Viji Subramaniam
Mississippi Music Consultant
Adam Bartos
Costume Design
Mississippi:
Ellen Lutter
Uganda:
Susan Iyall
India:
Kinnari Panikar
Wardrobe
Supervisor:
Sharen Davis
Costumer
Kelly O'Gurian
Make-up
Mustaque Ashrafi
Edna Sheen
Title Illustrations
Ameeta Nanji
Opticals
The Effects House
Corporation
Supervising Sound Editor
Margie Crimmins
Sound Editor
Mary Ellen Porto
ADR Editor
Marissa Littlefield
Sound Recordists
Alex Griswold
Music:
Gary Denton
Glenn Aulepp
Dolby stereo
ADR Recordist
Paul Zydel
Sound Re-recordists
Rick Dior
Foley Walker
Marko Costanzo
Production Assistants
Jimmy Odongo
Clement Mawenu
George Katamba
Joseph Mbaziira
Nelson Ochieng
Hajira Majid
Patrick McDill
Keith Mitchell
Patricia Rodrigue
Stunt Co-ordinator
Bob Minor
Phil Neilson
Stunts
Suzanne Rampe
Janet Paparazzo
Stunt Doubles
Dawn Cadena
Napoleon Moore

Cast
Denzel Washington
Demetrius
Sarita Choudhury
Mina
Roshan Seth
Jay
Sharmila Tagore
Kinnu
Charles S. Dutton
Tyrone
Joe Seneca
Williben
Ranjit Chowdhry
Anil
Mohan Gokhale
Pontiac
Mohan Agashe
Kanti Napkin
Tico Wells
Dexter
Yvette Hawkins
Aunt Rose
Anjan Srivastava
Jammubhai
Dipti Suthar
Chanda
Varsha Thaker
Kusumben
Ashok Lath
Harry Patel
Natalie Oliver
Alicia LeShay

Karen Pinkston
Mrs Morgan
Willy Cobbs
Skillet
Mira Nair
Rajika Puri
Gossips
Sharon Williams
Tadice
Cyrelo Hughes
DJ
Stacy Swinford
Bubba
Rick Senn
Piggly Wiggly Checker
Jim Haffey
White Truck Driver
Dillon Rozell Gross
Police Officer
Larry Haggard
Joe
E. W. Colvin
Grandcraw
Joyce Murrah
Lady at Lusco's
Kevin McNeil
Clarence
Reverend Fred Matthews
Granddaddy
Mahlon Bouldin
Student
Buddy St. Amant
Biloxi Cop
James Dale
Businessman
Ben Burford
Bank Manager
Sam Sherrill
Phinias T. Turnbull
Alix Henry Sanders
Barber
Alix W. Sanders
Postman
Jerone Wiggins
James
Sadie Carr
Mildred
Richard Crick
White Customer
Shung Moo Joe
Chinese Customer
Jaimini Thaker
Kanti Bhai
Hollis Pippin
Sylvester Artiste III
Dewey Buffington
Evangelist
Tony McGhee
J. D. Barrett
Tre'demont Spearman
Argentina Moore
Rappers
Nora Boland
Patsy Garrett
Shop-at-Home Anchor
People
Konga Mbandu
Okelo
Sahira Nair
Young Mina
Michael Wawuyo
Soldier on Bus
Phavin Parbario
Young Jay
Emanuel Mudara
Young Okelo
Immaculate Byakatonda
Okelo's Mother
Amrit Panesar
Mrs Bedi
Jimmy Din
Bharat
Bonnie M. Lubega
Teacher
Sammy E. D.
Senkumba
Taxi Driver
Mayambala Ssekasi
Prison Captain
Joseph Olita
Idi Amin
Muteta Wilberforce
Soldier at Roadblock

10,170 feet
113 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Mira Nair

Kampala, Uganda, 1972: Jay, an Indian lawyer who specialises in defending black Africans, is expelled with his wife Kinnu and young daughter Mina when Idi Amin decrees that all Asians should be deported. Jay is bitter about leaving what he considers to be his homeland and is hurt when his friend Okelo asserts that Africa is now for the black Africans.

Greenwood, Mississippi, 1990: Jay and Kinnu now run a local liquor store for motel owner Anil, while Mina works as the motel's receptionist. Jay spends much of his time writing to the Ugandan government claiming compensation for the confiscation of his property. On the way home from a shopping expedition for wedding provisions for Anil, Mina crashes her boss' car into a truck owned by Demetrius, a handsome young black man who runs a carpet-cleaning business. On the night of the wedding celebrations, Mina is asked out by the eligible Harry Patel. They end up in a local night-club, where Mina bumps into Demetrius. They dance, and it becomes obvious that they are attracted to one another; Harry wants to leave, but to his chagrin, Mina stays behind with Demetrius.

Demetrius invites Mina to his father Williben's birthday party to meet his aunt Rose and his younger brother Dexter. Meanwhile, Jay has finally received an invitation from the Ugandan authorities to a court hearing in Kampala. At Williben's party, Mina is a success with Demetrius' family. However, when Demetrius' ex-wife Alicia turns up, Mina begins to suspect that Demetrius is using her to make Alicia jealous. Nevertheless, she agrees to spend the next weekend with him at Biloxi Beach, without her parents' knowledge. They are spotted there by Anil and a friend, who break into the hotel room. A fight ensues, and the lovers are arrested.

Mina is bailed out by her father and forbidden to see Demetrius again. The local Asian motel owners boycott Demetrius, whose business begins to decline. His partner Tyrone warns him to stick to his own kind. Mina confronts her father about his racist attitude to her relationship with Demetrius. Feeling that they are not wanted in Mississippi, and that the situation in Uganda has improved, Jay wants the family to return to Africa. Mina runs away to find Demetrius, and they decide to explore the world together. Kinnu tells Jay that she must stay in Mississippi to await Mina's return. Jay leaves for Uganda, where he

discovers that Okelo died many years ago. He finally acknowledges that his future lies with his family in the US.

With her second feature film, Mira Nair turns from the back streets of Bombay to the cultural tributaries of the Mississippi by way of the Ugandan highlands – a trajectory that mirrors her own migration from Orissa in East Africa to Harvard University. Idi Amin's mass expulsion of Ugandan Asians, which provides the trigger for the story, had a profound effect on their lives. Many of them lost property and status, becoming exiles in far-flung communities hostile to what was seen as a threatening invasion.

But in spite of her unique viewpoint as an Asian woman, Nair cannot prevent Mina and Demetrius' romance from appearing something of a cliché. Miscegenation is hardly a new theme for Hollywood; for some time now, it has offered liberal white approaches to, for example, the American Indian, African Americans, Mexicans and, more recently, the Vietnamese and Japanese. What's different here is the exclusion of any overarching white perspective or white characters.

Unfortunately, though, Soonie Taraporevala's script is disappointingly unadventurous in its treatment of the lovers. Demetrius is too perfect a figure – the 'good son' who gives up a college scholarship to support his widowed father – bringing to mind the unblemished Sidney Poitier heroes of the late 60s. Mina is depicted as more of a rebel, but her non-conformity is presented primarily in terms of sexual transgression, which tends to diminish her potential as the focus for a wider-ranging critique of her culture's racism and sexism.

The script's portrayal of both Asians and African Americans also lays it open to the accusation of ethnic stereotyping. Nair's precise eye for detail and for landscape is some compensation; the economic divisions of Demetrius' father Williben's youth are effectively evoked by a single shot of the huge lawns belonging to the affluent whites living on the 'right' side of the Mississippi. And, despite the brevity of the Uganda flashbacks, Jay's passion for his 'homeland' is powerfully conveyed.

Indeed, the final sequences, with Jay's melancholic contemplation of the ruins of his old house in Kampala, and Mina and Demetrius' respective farewells to their families before taking off on their own migration, are *Mississippi Masala's* most moving moments. One is left wishing that the movie had begun just at the point where it leaves off.

Farrah Anwar

New Year's Day

Certificate
(Not yet issued)
Distributor
Contemporary
Production Companies
International
Rainbow Pictures
A Jagfilm
Producer
Judith Wolinsky
Associate Producer
Phyllis Curott
Assistant Director
Helen Kantor
Screenplay
Henry Jaglom
Director of Photography
Joey Forsyte
Colour
Technicolor
Additional Photography
Hanania Baer
Nesya Blue
Associate Editor
Ruth Zucker Wald
Set Decorator
Barbara Flood
Songs
"Don't Lose Heart"
by and performed
by Cris Williamson:
"It's a Most Unusual
Day" by Jimmy
McHugh, Harold
Adamson; "Summer
Nights in the City"
by and performed
by Daniel Kane
Make-up Artist
Angela Nogaro
Title Design
Pacific Title
Sound Recordists
Judy Karp
Additional:
Sunny Meyer
Catherine Calderon
Sound Re-recordists
Paul Sharpe
Edward F. Suski
John Boyd
Production Assistants
Elicia Laport
Tommy Winston
Patrick Woods

Cast
Maggie Jakobson
Lucy
Gwen Welles
Annie
Melanie Winter
Winona
Henry Jaglom
Drew
David Duchovny
Billy
Milos Forman
Lazlo
Michael Emil
Dr Stadthagen
Donna Germain
Dr Stadthagen's
Friend
Tracy Reiner
Marjorie
Harvey Miller
Lucy's Father
Irene Moore
Lucy's Mother
James DePriest
Lucy's Shrink
James Hurt
Winona's Brother
Robert Hallak
Delivery Man
Katherine Wallach
His Friend
Robert Morton
Her Friend
Adam Guettel
Young Man
Kristina Loggia
Stella
Rodger Parsons
Annie's Boss
Paul Dark
Red-headed Man

8,280 feet
92 minutes

USA 1989

Director: Henry Jaglom

Drew, a writer whose marriage has failed, leaves his house in Los Angeles and flies to New York, where he has rented a Manhattan apartment. Arriving early on New Year's Day, he discovers the previous tenants, Lucy, Annie and Winona, still in residence and not planning to move out till the next day. Unable to find a hotel room, Drew reluctantly accepts the women's suggestion that he should stay over, and is gradually caught up in their plans and problems.

Winona, a photographer, intends to have a baby, but has yet to choose the father. Lucy, who voices animated cartoons, is moving to Los Angeles to escape a damaging relationship. Annie, who works for an art gallery, is distressed at the imminent break-up of their shared household. During the course of the day, various people show up for an informal farewell party – among them Lucy's parents and her boyfriend, Billy, who all try to persuade her not to go.

Others include a fast-food delivery man; Dr Stadthagen, a 'psychosexologist', with his woman friend; Lazlo, the superintendent of the building; Winona's brother; Marjorie, a friend of Lucy's; Annie's boss; and Lucy's psychiatrist. As the guests pair off, talk and flirt with each other in shifting patterns, Lucy – who has seen Billy making out with Marjorie – becomes increasingly isolated and depressed. Getting drunk, she makes advances to Drew but then backs off, and they fall chastely asleep together.

Meanwhile, Winona has departed with a promising candidate for fatherhood, while Annie and Billy acknowledge mutual attraction. Waking up, Lucy finds Annie and Billy making love, and furiously ejects Billy naked from the apartment. Annie takes pills, and slumps in the bath declaring passionate love to Lucy. In the morning, Lucy tells Drew that Annie will be fine, and that she herself is leaving for Los Angeles. Drew gives her the key to his house.

Swimming with dolphins, Lucy tells Drew in one of the discursive conversations that meander through *New Year's Day*, is fine "once you get over how much they look like sharks". Most of the odd fish swimming around her apartment can be classified (from Lucy's angle) as either sharks or dolphins, and her main problem is deciding which are which. Once she's done so, and seen off the chief shark, she's free to move on.

New Year's Day follows the pattern of Henry Jaglom's two previous movies, *Always* and *Someone to Love*, in

assembling a bunch of loquacious people in a restricted venue and letting them rip on love, sex and psychological hang-ups, while pointing the camera at them in a deceptively artless manner. But in both earlier works, Jaglom made himself and his own problems the focal point, prompting complaints in some quarters that he was using his films as glorified psychotherapy sessions. This time he has wisely pushed himself to one side, making Drew (played by the director, looking rather like Jack Nicholson's melancholic brother) as much onlooker as participant.

The plot, as always with Jaglom, is essentially a line on which to hang the talk, but by focusing on Lucy (an appealing, vulnerable performance from Maggie Jakobson) and her dilemma, he gives his narrative more coherence than usual. The seemingly random camerawork conceals a fairly complex structure, balancing close-ups against two-shots and intercutting different conversations to reflect off each other – sometimes flipping back to the same pair, sometimes to a realigned pairing, like a less schematic version of *La Ronde*. And at one crucial point, Jaglom pulls back to a rare wide angle, showing Lucy miserably isolated among various couples avidly groping each other's psyches.

The film's subtitle is *Time to Move On*, but *Letting Go* or *Starting Over* could equally have served. Not only Lucy and Drew, but most of the other characters (even the manipulative Billy) are faced by the need to detach themselves, to stop – as Lucy's shrink puts it – "listening to the wrong voices. You have to listen to your voice". Psychological truism maybe, but in the context of the film's overlapping monologues and dangling conversations it makes good sense – especially for Lucy, besieged by deviously motivated advice, and making her living by providing voices for other people's creations.

One of Jaglom's strengths as a film-maker is that he genuinely seems to like his characters, even the less admirable ones, and to be intrigued by whatever they'll do or say next. This sense of wry appreciation of human foible sustains the comedy, which blends several Jaglom regulars (Michael Emil, in manic overdrive as ever, and Gwen Welles) into a fluent ensemble, along with an oddly unsettling cameo from Milos Forman, at once cuddly and sinister. *New Year's Day* ends with the director putting the whole action in perspective with a meditation on interstellar light and the relativity of time: "Past, present, future – it all depends which star you're standing on".

Philip Kemp

Suburban Commando

Certificate
PG
Distributor
Entertainment
Production Company
New Line Cinema
Producer
Howard Gottfried
Production Executive
Timothy Gray
Production Controller
Gail Rodono
Production Co-ordinator
Lisa M. Cochran
Unit Production Manager
John H. Burrows
Location Managers
Ralph B. Meyer
Additional:
John-Steven Agoglia
Executive-in-charge of Post-production
Joe Fineman
Post-production Supervisor
Ric Keeley
2nd Unit Director
David Cass
Casting
Fern Champion
Dori Zuckerman
Extras:
Star Casting
Assistant Directors
Ray Marsh
James Dillon
Robin Leigh Fleck
Michael Alan Kahn
Vicki Jackson-Lemay
Screenplay
Frank Cappello
Directors of Photography
Patrick J. Swovelin
Additional:
Ken Lambkin
Richard Clabaugh
Charlie Lieberman
Colour
DeLuxe
Additional Photography
Gary Davis
Camera Operators
Scott Sohan
Ed Thompson
B:
Gilbert Prowler
Scott Fuller
Ted H. Hauser
Douglas Beal
Motion Control FX:
Eric Swenson
Visual Effects Supervisors
Richard Malzahn
Robert Habros
Special Visual Effects
Perpetual Motion
Pictures
Optical Supervisor
Albert Cox
Video/Graphics Production Supervisor
Bob Morgenroth
Graphic Artist
Kenny Nakaji
Effects Animator
Heather Davis
Additional Editor
Sonny Baskin
Associate Editors
Jeffrey Okun
Peter Schink
Production Designers
Ivo Cristante
Additional:
C.J. Strawn
Art Directors
Karen D. Kornbau
Antoine Bonsorte
Additional:
Michael Kraft
Art Department Co-ordinator
Mary Jasonowski

Reviews

Mississippi Masala
New Year's Day
Suburban Commando

Set Decorators
Cliff Cunningham
Additional:
James R. Barrows

Set Dressers
Bobby Pollard
Erwin Hamming
On-set:
Michael Peritz

Scenic Artists
Doc Dower
Buz Hitchcock
Sara Robinson
Scott B. Dietz
Joe R. Gentile Jr
Jerry Mischevich

Storyboard Artist
Marc Baird

Sculptures
Lyndell Dean Wolff

PMP Effects
Producer
Charles L. Finance

Special Effects
Reel EFX

Power Boots
Designer
Caleb Gless

Creature Effects
Steve Johnson's
XFX Production
Co-ordinator:
Bill Corso
Crew:
Alan Schockley-Gray

Mechanical Effects
B & B Special Effects
Co-ordinators:
Tommy L. Bellissimo
Charles Belardinelli
Crew:
R.H. Ahmanson
Dean Miller
Randy Lee Tarum
Phillip Hartmann
Rolf G. Larson
Vincent Hammond
Donn Markel
Joseph Viskocil
Timothy Henley
Andre Oakes

Models
Tom Cooper
Henry Darnell
Jim Logiudice
Mike Stuart
Ray Cavalluzzi
Additional:
Scott Alexander
Richard Cross
Thomas Zell
Greg Jein

Miniatures
Design Setters

Orchestrations
David Michael Frank
Larry Schwartz

Music Supervisors
Bonnie Greenberg
Jill Meyers

Music Editors
John La Salandra
Virginia Ellsworth

Songs
"Almost Like Paradise"
by David Michael
Frank, Robert Jason,
performed by Robert
Jason; "Ramsey"
by Harold Bronson,
performed by The
Next Big Thing;
"It's a Nice Place to
Live (But I Wouldn't
Want to Visit)" by
David Michael Frank,
Robert Jason,
performed by J-Rock,
Hulk Hogan; "Do You
Want to Party" by
Harry Wayne Casey,
Richard Finch,
performed by K.C. and
the Sunshine Band;
"Black Book" by Chip
Kinman, Tony
Kinman, performed
by Rank and File;
"Freight Train"
by Jim Gillette,
Michael Angelo,
performed by Nitro



Space invader (Hulk Hogan)...

Wardrobe Designer

Ha Nguyen

Costume Supervisor

Christopher J. Kristoff

On-set Wardrobe

Charlene Amateau

Key Make-up Artists

Cheri Montesanto-

Medcalf

Cynthia Floyd Adams

Title Design

Jeffrey Okun

Kathy Broyles

Supervising

Sound Editors

Christopher Sheldon

Dane A. Davis

Sound Editor

Kimberly Lowe Voigt

ADR Supervisor

G.W. Brown

Foley Editors

Nicholas Forshanger

Tom Hammond

Sound Recordists

Walter Hoylman

Music:

Armin Steiner

Additional Music:

Kevin Clark

Andy Waterman

Peter Kelsey

Sound Re-recordists

Donald O. Mitchell

Michael Herbeck

Frank A. Montano

Sound Effects

Editors

Kini Kay

Todd Toon

Arnold Finkelstein

Willy Allen

Peter Tomaszewicz

Foley Artists

Gregg Barbanell

Joan Rowe

Additional Voices

Super Loopers

Consultants

Creative:

Frank Cappello

Locations:

Bill Doyle

Production

Assistants

Eric Cottrell

Viola M. Johnson

Rachel Sterns

Thomas A. Nelson

Key:

David Topor

Stunts

Michael Ballew

Brutus Beefcake

Charlie Brewer

Keith Campbell

David Cass

R.J. Chambers

Clark Coleman

Joseph Cosentino

Everett Crunch

Dino DeMaria

David Efron

Bud Davis

Danny Epper

Lila Finn

Gloria Fioramonti

Vincent Hammond

Bill Hart

Geno Hart

Tony Jefferson

Tracy Keehn-Dashnaw

Myron Lapeka

Lane Leavitt

Clint Lilley

Ray Lynkins

Diane Peterson

Bobby Porter

Ray Saniger

Ben Scott

Michael Paul Stone

Bob Turkune

James Trow

David Vaccaro

Steve Walters

George Wilbur

Jerry Wills

Animal Trainers

Animal Connection

Benay Karp

Karen Sue Thomas

Sandi Wirth

Cast

Hulk Hogan

Shep Ramsey

Christopher Lloyd

Charlie Wilcox

Shelley Duvall

Jenny Wilcox

William Ball

General Sutor

Laura Mooney

Theresa Wilcox

Michael Faustino

Mark Wilcox

Larry Miller

Adrian Beltz

Tony Longo

Knuckles

JoAnn Dearing

Margie Tanen

Roy Dotrice

Zanuck

Dennis Burkley

Deak

Mike Ballew

Dave Efron

Car Fanatics

Mark Calaway

Hutch

Luis Contreras

Ringo

Jack Elam

Colonel Dustin

"Dusty" McHowell

Tony Epper

Teeth

Nick Eldredge

President Hashina

John Furlong

Official

Denice Kumagai

Kim

Marc Miles

Mailman

Will Miles

Paperboy

Elisabeth Moss

Little Girl

Christopher Neame

Commander

Malachi Pearson

Eric

Duane Taniguchi

Yamakawa

Vincent Hammond

Mutant Sutor

Richard Narita

Zukaki

Marcy Goldman

Lady

Jennifer DeLoria

Girl

Ellis Edwards

Keith Campbell

Punks

Joey Simmrin

Kid

Skip Stellrecht

Soldier

Sumant

Store Owner

Tom Morga

Mime

Louan Gideon

Woman at Vending

Machine

Sparkle

Woman at Fruitstand

Billy "Sly" Williams

Bystander

Pat Millicano

Man with Dog

8,143 feet

90 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Burt Kennedy

In a distant galaxy, the evil General Sutor holds President Hashina captive, forcing him to watch the orgy of galactic violence which Sutor hopes will lead to the elimination of Hashina's planet. Shep Ramsey, intergalactic bounty hunter, intervenes, and under attack Sutor begins to mutate, revealing himself as a monster. Shep escapes just before Sutor's ship explodes. Eager to do battle with further aliens, Shep is instead recommended by his commander Zanuck to take a spell of leave on earth. Dejected, the bounty hunter lands in his badly damaged craft.

Meanwhile, hen-pecked Charlie Wilcox fails to summon the nerve to ask his boss Mr Beltz for a raise, and on returning home is put out to discover that his wife Jenny has converted his workshop into a room to let. Shep applies, and despite his size and rough table manners, the Wilcoxes allow him to stay. Curious as to his lodger's origins (Shep claims to be French), Charlie tracks him to his spacecraft. He also finds the bounty hunter's ray gun under his mattress, and accidentally sets fire to speedway cars parked across the street. The use of the gun is picked up in space and Sutor's henchmen begin to trace Shep.

Disaster strikes when a freeze gun 'dropped by Shep is discovered by bank robbers. Shep uses his homing device to locate them and forestall the raid, but Charlie is inadvertently and temporarily 'frozen'. The conflict with the robbers enables Sutor, who is still alive, to trace Shep, and two bounty hunters arrive at Mr Beltz's office. Sutor decides to finish Shep off himself, and takes Charlie and his family hostage. Shep gives himself up to save them, but at that moment Charlie manages to activate Shep's intergalactic equipment, saving his friend, destroying Sutor and making the world safe. Shep leaves, taking with him Mr Beltz's secretary Margie.

Suburban Commando is a case of coats having been cut to fit such cloth as was available. It has

been claimed (facetiously, perhaps) that it was originally written for Arnold Schwarzenegger and Danny De Vito, under the title *Urban Commando*. In which case the tenor of the piece has undergone major alteration with the casting of Hulk Hogan, star of America's Saturday morning televised wrestling programme, to take account of the tastes of his juvenile following. The spacecraft of our muscled hero was a cast-off from a previous production, although the extreme modesty of the locations – a convincingly dull strip of motorway, an anonymous slab of suburbia – give the proceedings a touch of authenticity and interest lacking elsewhere.

The strangest element, perhaps, is the presence of Burt Kennedy as director. The doyen of good little Westerns with a nice line in laconic humour is visible here in the way fights slip towards becoming shoot-outs or showdowns, and the soundtrack joins in with quotations from one or other of the 'great Western' themes. The film's humour derives from two sources: Hogan's 'Gulliver' in a land of Lilliputians, sorting out the toughs who terrorise the mild-mannered Charlie ("Now, that's not right!"), or establishing further Good Guy credentials by reversing the positions of gorging owner and hungry dog in a hot, locked car; and from the Walter Mitty-ish fantasy of Christopher Lloyd's Mr Ordinary stepping timidly into his hero's intergalactic space boots.

There are ready-made laughs in Shep's execrable table manners, and his various misunderstandings of the earthlings' ways, though Shelley Duvall's own line in goofy suburban humour goes sadly unexploited. What is more objectionable is the window-dressing of the 'new brutalism', courtesy of the effects department (the film uses the special effects co-ordinator from *Die Hard 2*). Shep in these sequences is as much Schwartzkopf as Schwarzenegger, deliriously blasting everything that moves in space or, watched by a crowd of adoring tots, on a space-invaders game.

Verina Glaessner



...and admiring tots

Certificate
15
Distributor
Columbia TriStar
Production Companies
Odyssey-Regency/HBO
In association with
Cinema Plus, LP
A Beco production
Producer
Tony Adams
Associate Producer
Trish Caroselli Rintels
Executive-in-charge of Production/Post-production
Elton MacPherson
Production Executive
Carrie Dieterich
Production Co-ordinator
Lisa Lynn Kearsley
Production Manager
Alan Levine
Location Manager
Andrew M. Comins
Casting
Gail Levin
Lauren Lloyd
Assistant Directors
David C. Anderson
Matthew Dunne
Katy Garretson
New York:
Ron Bozman
Kyle McCarthy
Screenplay
Blake Edwards
Director of Photography
Dick Bush
Panavision
Colour
Technicolor
Camera Operators
Tim Vanik
"B": Michael Gary
Meinardus
Jeffrey Laszlo
Video Operator
David J. McGraw
Additional Special Visual Effects
Industrial Light & Magic
Producer:
Mark S. Miller
Supervisor:
Michael Owens
Co-ordinator:
Roni McKinley
Optical Photography Supervisor:
Bruce Vecchitto
Camera Supervisor:
Bruce Walters
Camera Operators:
Patrick T. Myers
Charlie Canfield
Plate Camera Operator:
Terry Chostner
Optical Camera Operators:
Jon Alexander
Jeff Duran
Pat Repola
Matte Artist:
Yusei Uesugi
Animation Supervisor:
Wes Ford Takahashi
Animator:
Tony Stacchi
Animation Co-ordinator:
Shari Malyn
Optical Line-up:
Lori Nelson
Dave Karpman
Rotoscope Supervisor:
Tom Bertino
Rotoscope Artists:
Ellen Mueller
Kathleen Beeler
Editor:
Tim Eaton
Art Director:
Doug Chiang
Production Assistant:
Dawna Weichel
Editor
Robert Pergament
Associate Editor
Roger Greene
Production Designer
Rodger Maus
Art Director
Sandy Getzler
Set Decorator
John Franco Jnr
Special Effects
Unlimited
Music
Henry Mancini
Music Performed by
Violin Solo:
David Wilson

Music Supervisor
Tom Bocci
Music Editor
Stephen A. Hope
Songs
"Both Sides Now" by
Joni Mitchell, performed
by Paul Young and
Clannad; "Barren
Ground" by Bruce
Hornbly, John Hornsby,
performed by Bruce
Hornbly & the Range;
"Old Habits Are Hard to
Break" by John Hiatt,
Marshall Chapman,
performed by Ronnie
Milsap; "You Can't Resist
It" by and performed by
Lyle Lovett; "Sendin' Out
a Message" by Antonina
Armat, Rick Neigher,
performed by The Jets;
"So Quiet, So Still"
by and performed by
Nathalie Archangel;
"Dream After Dream" by
David Dixon, Michael
Szumowski, performed
by Indecent Obsession;
"It's All There" by Henry
Mancini, Alan Bergman,
Marilyn Bergman,
performed by Jody
Watley; "Slam Dunk" by
Kevin DuBrow, Harry
Parese, performed by
Pretty Boy Floyd; "Lover
Man" by Roger Ram
Ramirez, Jimmy
Sherman, James Davis,
performed by Billie
Holiday; "A Lifetime of
Love" by Tom Bocci,
performed by Don
Grady; "Persuasion" by
and performed by Jim
Chappell; "Are You
Listenin' Lucky?" by and
performed by Joe Ely
Costume Design
Ellen Mirojnick
Wardrobe
Christopher Lawrence
Key: Colby Bart
Make-up
Larry Abbott
Supervisor:
Rick Sharp
Ellen Barkin:
Ronnie Spector
Title Design
Anthony Goldschmidt
Titles
Pacific Title
Supervising
Sound Editor
Kay Rose
Sound Editors
J. H. Arrufat
Linda Folk
Jerelyn J. Harding
James J. Isaacs
Carl Mahakian
Vickie Sampson
David Spence
Supervising
ADR Editor
Bill Voigtlander
Sound Recordist
Jerry Jost
Music:
Robert Fernandez
Dolby stereo
Sound Re-recordists
Robert W. Glass Jnr
Richard D. Rogers
Grover G. Helsley
Sound Effects
James J. Romeo
Technical Adviser
Basketball:
Keith Cubba
Production Assistants
Adam Carr
Casey Ivey
Darren C. Waters
Peter Williams
Stunt Co-ordinator
Joe Dunne
Stunts
Jean Epper
A. Michael Lerner
Linda Lee Franklin
Frank Lloyd
Tracy Keesh-Dashnaw
Billy Lucas

Cast
Ellen Barkin
Amanda Brooks
Jimmy Smits
Walter Stone
JoBeth Williams
Margo Brofman

Lorraine Bracco
Sheila Faxton
Tony Roberts
Arnold Freidkin
Perry King
Steve Brooks
Bruce Martyn Payne
The Devil
Lysette Anthony
Liz
Victoria Mahoney
Felicia
Basil Hoffman
Higgins
Catherine Keener
Steve's Secretary
Kevin Kilner
Dan Jones
David Wohl
Attorney Caldwell
James Harper
Lieutenant Laster
John Lafayette
Sergeant Phillips
Jim J. Bullock
The Psychic
Diana Chesney
Mrs Wetherspoon
Joe Flood
Mac the Guard
Emma Walton
Fur Protester
Louis Eppolito
Al the Guard
Yvette Freeman
Mae the Maid
Dennis Paladino
Duke
Tea Leoni
Dream Girl
Rick Aiello
Wiseguy at Duke's
F. William Parker
Barber
Ben Hartigan
Minister
David Gale
Doctor
Jessie Jones
Arnold's Secretary
Savant Tanney
Judge Harcrow
Virginia Morris
Assistant DA
Robert Clotworthy
Bailiff
Patricia Clipper
Girl in Elevator
Robert Elias
Photographer
Michelle Wong
Photo Assistant
Marti Muller
Woman Client
Mindy Lawson
Kimberly Oja
Teri Gold
F & B Models
Lily Mariye
Nurse
William Shockley
Jennie Nauman
Annette Quinn
Dena Burton
Michelle Reese
Party Guests
Alana Silvani
Jacquelyn Moen
Girls at City Grille
Karen Medak
Saleswoman
Tracy Lambert
Tannie Vrenon
Store Models
Michael Badalucco
Hard Hat
Gregory Barnett
Thugs at Duke's
Jay R. Goldenberg
Sardi's Maitre d'
Faith Minton
Nancy the Bouncer
Rebecca Wood
Linda Dona
Gay Club Patrons
Helena Apothaker
Gay Club Waitress
Elena Statheros
Girl at Aiko's
Jim Lovelett
Jogger
Barbara Schiliaci
Robert Towers
Tony Genaro
Mental Patients
Ross Brittain
Morning DJ
Richard Provost
Linda Gary
Voices of God
Molly Okunoff
Little Girl

9,278 feet
103 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Blake Edwards

Advertising executive and notorious womaniser Steve Brooks is invited to a party by former conquest Margo Brofman. He finds only two other guests, Liz and Felicia, and realises too late that they intend to kill him. After an unsuccessful drowning attempt, Margo shoots him dead. In Purgatory, he is told he will be restored to life but with a difficult mission – to trace anyone female who genuinely likes him. Success will mean his acceptance into Heaven, failure will lead him straight to Hell.

He wakes in his New York apartment to find the Devil lodging a complaint against an excess of divine clemency in Steve's case. Accordingly, Steve's second life acquires an additional complication: he is given the body of a woman. In order to explain his presence as a female in his own apartment, Steve invents the role of Amanda, Steve's long-lost half-sister, claiming to have taken over after her brother's sudden decision to become a drop-out and go abroad. Amanda's first step is to confront Margo, who incredulously accepts that Amanda knows all about Steve's murder, and agrees to help with fashion advice, money and contacts, in order to ensure her silence.

Amanda assumes Steve's duties at the advertising agency, using her inside knowledge to persuade his boss, Arnold, to accept the attractive but ungainly stranger in his company's midst. She begins to contact all the women in Steve's address book, with discouraging results, but gets on well with Steve's former colleague and good friend, Walter Stone. To prove to Arnold that she can handle Steve's workload, Amanda sets out to win over Sheila Faxton, head of a major cosmetics corporation. A lesbian, Sheila is attracted to her, and the Faxton account is soon awarded to the agency. But Amanda cannot bring herself to consummate the relationship with Sheila, and finally confesses to her that her only objective has been mercenary.

Reminded by the Devil that time is running short, Amanda redoubles her efforts to find a true friend among Steve's conquests, but without success. After a drinking spree with Walter, she falls exhausted into bed beside him; next morning, he reveals that, without her recalling it, they have made love. Steve's corpse is discovered, and as Margo has taken the precaution of hiding her gun in his apartment, Amanda is the obvious suspect. Amanda's defence, that she is Steve, leads promptly to a mental institution where she is regularly visited by Walter. He warns her that the medical prognosis on

her pregnancy is that it could prove fatal, but she refuses to have an abortion and proposes that they get married. In due course, with Walter at hand, she gives birth to a girl. As Amanda dies, she realises that her new daughter loves her unreservedly. In Heaven, watching husband and daughter visit his/her grave, Steve/Amanda has only one remaining problem: whether to be a male or female angel.

By way of apology, perhaps, for the doubtful wisdom of allowing the obnoxious, suicidal philanderer of his previous film, *Skin Deep*, to survive to an ill-deserved happy-ever-after triumph, Blake Edwards smartly kills him off at the beginning of *Switch*. To be accurate, he kills us all off (muzzle to camera/gunshots/total blackout) and makes a fresh start for both story and audience, as if intending to delete not only the parodic vulgarity of his opening scenes but also our recollection of a twenty-year parade of cruelly similar confessions, stretching back to the more reliable, more respectable era of *Breakfast at Tiffany's* and *The Wild Rovers*.

If, bar a few smudges, the mental slate could be so simply wiped, *Switch* would indeed represent a remarkable rebirth: brash, funny and tender-hearted, the kind of let's-try-again fantasy that evokes *It's a Wonderful Life* but has seldom worked since. Mostly the innocence of *Switch* is subverted precisely because it knows too much and because Edwards, whose films are consistently based on gleeful betrayals, has no hesitation in betraying himself.

Even within the laws of its own magic, *Switch* is glibly evasive. The pact between Steve and God is that if just one woman can be found who likes him, his soul is saved. Quite apart from the fresh insight that this offers on the question of anyone's eligibility for Paradise, the offer seems a bit of a cheat in that God could be expected to know already if such a woman exists. If she doesn't, Steve is being given a unique chance to cancel out his sins, and the Devil is right to complain ▶



Ellen Barkin, confronting demons

◀ – the system isn't supposed to work that way. The implication is that Steve's *real* test will be to prove himself likeable to a woman who is unaware of his past (and, therefore, of his true nature), in which case her affection becomes of questionable value. It also seems part of some different – although purgatorial – mission to inflict on Steve the experience of being a woman and of having to put up with the kind of male chauvinism at which he has excelled, since the task of getting someone to like him as a man would arguably be more of a challenge.

But the most devious twist in the story, of course, is the success of Steve/Amanda's quest, in that the female who finally loves him/her is a new-born baby unable to make any rational evaluation of his/her true worth. Judging from his final sequences, Edwards recognises that his story has toppled from its tightrope by this point – and perhaps even loses interest in it. His writing adopts a primal tear-jerking phraseology as Steve/Amanda embraces pregnancy ("When I die, there's a part of me that goes on...it's an honest-to-God miracle"), or when husband and daughter stand at the dear-departed's graveside in a lurid vista of burgeoning light and colour.

What keeps the whole thing in balance for long enough are, in fact, qualities that are nothing new to Edwards: a *frisson* of sexual ambiguity (*Victor/Victoria*), a coarse and lustful appreciation of physical appearance ("10"), a last-ditch apotheosis of unlikely reconciliation and joy (*That's Life!*). Edwards' strength, as it should be after innumerable *Pink Panthers*, is in pace, performance and heavyweight, fist-swinging comedy, while Edwards' curiosity, setting aside the pretext offered by a rudimentary Heaven (black with just a shaft of blue) is in sexual interchange so constant and inevitable that even God speaks with a forked tongue.

The fun to be had from *Switch* lies in its combination of these skills (the urbane use of the Scope format, for example) with the intriguingly homophobic notion that a man can adopt high heels and a miniskirt and look like Ellen Barkin without giving up his masculinity. What *Switch*, warts and all, unexpectedly revives is a confidence in Edwards as a filmmaker, as assured professional, and as vulnerable autobiographer. Despite – even because of – the sleight of hand, he has become interesting again, and at this late, Buñuelian phase of his career, shows signs of an effortless elegance in publicly confronting his own demons.

Philip Strick

Toto le héros (Toto the Hero)

Certificate

15
Distributor
Electric Pictures
Production Companies
Iblis Films (Brussels)/
Les Productions
Philippe Dussart
(Paris)/Metropolis Film
production (Berlin)
In association
with La RTBF
(Television Belge)/
Jacqueline Pierreux
With the
collaboration of FRZ
Films Production/
ZDF/Canal Plus/
La Direction
de l'Audio-Visuel
de la Communauté
Française de Belgique/
The Minister for
Culture of the
Vlaamse
Gemeenschap
With financial
assistance from Fonds
Eurimages de Conseil
de l'Europe
With the
participation of
Minister for Culture
and Communication
(Centre National de
la Cinématographie)/
The CGER-ASLK
Film Developed with
the agreement of the
European Script Fund/
Les Entrepreneurs
de l'audiovisuel
Européen
An initiative of the
Media programme
of the European
Community/
Frank Daniel/Femi
Executive Producers
Pierre Drouot
Dany Geys
Co-producers
Philippe Dussart
Luciano Gloor
Production Executive
Jacqueline Louis
Production Associate
Fidibus Film:
Marcia Falkenberg-
Lerner
Production Co-ordinators
Veca Film:
Paul Müller
Production Manager
Michael Schwartz

Casting

Gerda Diddens
Uschi Drews
Children:
Laurette
Vankeerberghen
Stéphane Oliver
Gerda Diddens
Assistant Directors
Danilo Catti
Bénédicte Lienard
Screenplay
Jaco van Dormael
Screenplay Collaborators
Laurette
Vankeerberghen
Pascal Lonhay
Didier de Neck
Director of Photography
Walter van den Ende
In colour
Camera Operator
Luc Drion
Graphics
Corinne DeGorre
Editor
Susana Rossberg
Art Director
Hubert Pouille
Set Designer
Frédéric Huwaert
Set Dressers
André Fonsny
Ludo Volders
Special Effects
Olivier de Lavelaye
Music
Pierre van Dormael
Music Performed by
The RTBF Symphony
Orchestra
The Dixie Ramblers
Marching Band
Songs
"Boom" by and
performed by
Charles Trenet
Wardrobe
An d'Huys
Anne Van Brée
Make-up
Kaatje van Damme
Sound Editor
Chantal Hymans
Sound Recordist
Dominique Warnier
Sound Re-recordists
Jean-Paul Loublier
Joern Poetzi
Matthias Lampert
Music:
André Defossez
Production Assistants
Ann Verheyen
Ulrike Hager
Philippe Rangoni
Claudia Bade
Stunts
Albert Goldberg
Léon Dutz
Subtitles
Laser Vidéo
Titres-Paris

Cast

Michel Bouquet
Old Thomas
Jo De Backer
Voice of Michel Bouquet
Adult Thomas
Thomas Godet
Young Thomas
Gisela Uhlen
Voice of Mireille Perrier
Old Evelynne
Mireille Perrier
Adult Evelynne
Sandrine Blancke
Alice
Peter Böhlke
Voice of Michel Robin
Old Alfred
Didier Ferney
Adult Alfred
Hugo Harold Harrison
Young Alfred
Fabienne Loriaux
Thomas' Mother
Klaus Schindler
Voice of Patrick Waleffe
Thomas' Father
Pascal Duquenne
Voice of François Toumarkine
Adult Célestin
Karim Moussati
Young Célestin
Didier de Neck
Monsieur Kant
Christine Smeysters
Madame Kant
Roland de Pauw
The Inspector
Léopold Verlaïne-Corbion
Baby Thomas
François Bette
Nurse
Maxime Verspecht
Alice van Dormael
Thomas, age 1
Damien Delaunoy
Thomas, age 3
Mérodie Delvaux
Deborah Gubin
Alice, age 5
Nicolas Duvauchel
The Chief of Camins
Harry Cleven
Jacques Lefevre
Jean-Henri Compere
Bouli Lanners
The Gangsters
Alexandre von Sivers
Head
Patrick Waleffe
Robert Dubois
Officials
Harry Cleven
Man Smoking
Marie-Pierre Meinzel
Cashier
Charlie Degotte
Bus Driver
Herwig Dewert
The Shopwalker
Henri Monin
The Warden
Daniel Dury
Headmaster
Roger Francel
Music Shopkeeper
Jo Deseure
Singer
Joël Delsaut
Fumo Ishimaru
Marianne Hanse
Jean Debevere
Musicians
Bernard Yerles
Man on Train
Gaston Bertin
Evelynne's Husband
Josse de Pauw
Pilot

8,206 feet
91 minutes

Subtitles

Belgium/France/Germany 1991

Director: Jaco Van Dormael

As an old man, Thomas plots the murder of his rival Alfred, and remembers his childhood... His loving father is killed in a plane crash while delivering goods as a favour for his neighbour, Monsieur Kant, a rich shipowner and the father of Alfred, who was born on the same day as Thomas. The latter fantasises that he and Alfred were inadvertently switched shortly after birth during a fire at the hospital. Following her husband's death, Thomas' mother is driven to stealing food, and Thomas and his younger brother Célestin, a Down's syndrome child, are persistently bullied by Alfred's gang.

When her husband's wrecked plane is discovered, Thomas' wife has to make a trip to Dover. She takes Célestin with her and leaves Thomas behind with his older sister Alice. Instead of going to camp as planned, they stay at home and a pubescent love flowers between them. The idyll is disrupted when Alice also begins paying attention to Alfred, and Thomas dares her to set fire to the Kants' home to prove her love for him. This she does, but is killed in the process. As a young man, Thomas still grieves over Alice. He meets a married woman, Evelynne, with a strong resemblance to his sister; they have an affair and decide to run away together. But they fail to meet, and Thomas returns home only to discover that Evelynne is married to Alfred.

Years later, as an old man, he plots to murder Alfred. When he confronts him, he finds out that Alfred knows about his affair with Evelynne (from whom he is now separated), and tells Thomas how much she had missed him. Thomas sees Evelynne once more at a political demonstration. Escaping from the old people's home where he lives, Thomas locks Alfred in a room and dresses up as him. A group of assassins who have been pursuing Alfred (seeking revenge after the collapse of the Kant family business) assume that Thomas is their prey and kill him. His ashes are scattered as he happily escapes his life of loss and finds peace.

Toto le Hero, winner of this year's Golden Camera award at the Cannes Film Festival, is a commendable début feature, at least for its acute and witty observation of the hero's childhood, and the moments of visual inspiration in its first half. As a tale of family misfortune, related in part from a child's point of view, *Toto* successfully captures the almost surreal strangeness of the adult world from this perspective, anxieties about parental separation, the 'family

romance', and fantasies about origins which the hero never resolves. Thomas believes that his Down's syndrome brother was born in a washing machine; that his older sister was conceived by his father licking his mother's hand; and, rather more mundanely, that he is really the son of the rich people next door.

In this world shot through by 'the imaginary', Thomas' sister Alice becomes the sexual centre. But Jaco Van Dormael's nod to Cocteau's *Les Enfants terribles* in the scene where brother and sister lie in bed together and pledge their love for each other actually promises a richer and more genuinely neurotic tale than the one served up. As the film switches to Thomas the man, psychological insight and moral tension is swapped for a conventional shorthand for mental states (chain-smoking, grimacing, running after people in crowds).

Vertigo is inevitably recalled by Thomas and Alfred's attempt to overcome their sense of loss over Alice by falling in love with her uncanny *doppelgänger*, Evelynne. Thomas' real obsession, however, is with Alfred, a 'bad object' substitute for his dead father, who in turn was 'killed' by Alfred's father (named Kant!). The death of Thomas' father is finally assuaged when Thomas himself is killed by being mistaken for Alfred, although the scene where Thomas' ashes gleefully laugh as they topple from a plane (the means of his father's death) unnecessarily belabours the point. As a tale of loss, incestuous love and infantile envy, *Toto* is finally disappointing, losing itself in quirkiness and plot complication, and adding little to the themes other than a nostalgia for a life lived, perhaps like all lives, unfulfilled.

Michael O'Pray



Origins: Fabienne Loriaux, Klaus Schindler

Un Nos Ola Leuad (One Full Moon)



Terminal lunacy: Dyfan Roberts

Certificate

(Not yet issued)

Distributor

BFI

Production

Companies

Film Cymru/S4C

A Gaucho Films

production

Executive Producer

John Hefin

Producer

Pauline Williams

Production

Managers

Cheryl Davies

Mike Jones

Marlyn Roberts

Mary Innes

Assistant Director

Dafydd Arthur

Williams

Screenplay

Gwenlyn Parry

Endaf Emlyn

Based on the novel by

Caradog Prichard

Director of

Photography

Ashley Rowe

In colour

Underwater

Photography

Mark Jarrold

Editor

Chris Lawrence

Art Director

Ray Price

Design Team

Bob Tunnicliff

Marc Jones

Donald Williams

Special Effects

Effects Associates

Music

Mark Thomas

Music Director

Christopher Warren

Green

Music Performed by

London Chamber

Orchestra

Costume Design

Jakki Winfield

Make-up

Marian Monios

Sound Editors

Nikki Turner

Steve Stockford

Sound Recordist

Richard Dyer

Cast

Dyfan Roberts

Man

Tudor Roberts

Boy

Betsan Llwyd

Mother

Delyth Einir

Jini

Cian Ciaran

Huw

Dilwyn Vaughn

Thomas

Moi

Robin Griffith

Uncle Wil

Stewart Jones

Canon

Michael Povey

Preis

Elliw Haf

Auntie Elin

Wyn Bowen Harries

Uncle Now Moi

Sian Wheldon

Moi's Mother

Grey Evans

Huws Person

Endaf Emlyn

Wmffra

Llyr Dyfan

Guto

Dafydd Clwyd

Em

Sioned Jones

Williams

Gres Elin

Mandi Owen

Sian Wyn Gibson

Maids

Siwan Humphries

Frank Rozelaar-

Green

Angels

Trefor ap Iorwerth

Driver

Marc Jason

Policeman

Marian Roberts

Stranger

Myron Lloyd

Nurse

Einir Wyn Parry

Cet

Don McCarthy

Joni Sowth

Gwynedd Roberts

Now Gorlan

Dennis Carr

Gwen Overton

Emyr Wyn Jones

Merfyn Davies

J.O. Jones

Gilligan Jones

Dic Gwalchmai

Geraint James

Derek Humphries

Owen Parri

Clarence Jones

Owen Morris

Sioned Roberts

8,820 feet

98 minutes

United Kingdom 1991

Director: Endaf Emlyn

Locked in an institution, an old man washes carefully, then sits down to wait. In a North Wales mountain village, a boy grows up in a small cottage with his mother. One night, a mob rampages through the village dragging with them Em, an elderly man accused of molesting a local girl, Jini, in the woods. The boy watches as Em is taken away by the police. While his mother works as laundrywoman at the canon's house, the boy plays with his friends Huw and Moi in the woods. Moi's mother and uncle have a violent row; subsequently, the uncle kills himself.

Years later, a man wanders through the moonlit, deserted village, revisiting the places the boy knew. With Huw and Moi, the boy meets his uncle, Mad Wil the Tinker, a violent epileptic who falls down in a fit. Later the boy encounters a kindly man, Humphrey, who gives him toys and money for his mother. The canon dies, and the mother refuses to work for the new parson. In church, the boy prays for food, and a basketful of luxuries appears by the cottage door.

Moi falls dangerously ill. Visiting him, the boy sees an angel hovering outside the bedroom window. Chased home by Mad Wil, the boy finds his mother bruised and dishevelled. Wil tries to break in, but the boy stabs his hand. Sent to stay at his aunt's farm, the boy suffers a fall, and while unconscious sees an angel pursuing him. His mother comes to visit, but grows increasingly deranged, and the boy has to escort her to an asylum. Back in the cottage, with her clothes and wedding ring, he weeps helplessly.

In the moonlight, the man roams around the now deserted and derelict cottage. Looking for work in the slate quarry, the boy finds only the body of Mad Wil, who has killed himself. On his way through the woods, he meets Jini and they sit by the lake. She makes advances to him, but he strangles her in panic. The man runs frantically down to the lakeside. Putting a wedding ring on his finger, he wades into the water, which closes over his head.

"We're not driving them crazy", protests the boy in response to his mother's remonstrance, "they're all going mad anyway". He's not far from the truth. As the deaths, suicides and terminal lunacies mount up ("Uncle Now's dead. He hanged himself in the shithouse", announces one lad dispassionately), *One Full Moon* occasionally risks slipping into a Welsh variant of doom-laden rural self-parody - *Under Milk Wood* meets *Cold Comfort Farm*. What saves it is the sheer intensity, ►

◀ and integrity, of its vision. Like the novel it's drawn from, it takes a child's-eye view – a perspective which (as another great Welsh novelist, Richard Hughes, reminded us) is in many respects literally mad.

With no trace of condescension, let alone sentimentality, Endaf Emlyn refracts everything that happens through the boy's fierce, puzzled gaze. Events assume significance out of all proportion to accepted adult values: a murderous knife fight is mildly entertaining; a friend pricking his own hand with a pin induces wild panic terror. The film's fractured, elliptical narrative style matches this vision of a world shadowed by incomprehensible rituals and obsessions.

Actuality and fantasy co-exist: drunkards are rebuked by a celestial voice from a wheel of fire, and the plucking of a goose can call down a silent snowstorm of feathers from the sky. Angels are as real as people, and as varied – one appears as a sweet young girl, another as a scowling pursuer with heavy black moustache – and no more arbitrary in their behaviour than the adults the boy encounters. Both Humphrey's kindness and Wil's violence seem equally unmotivated, and either, or neither, may be his true father.

Ashley Rowe's photography maintains the same mood of austere, haunted beauty. The film is shot through with elemental imagery – water, blood and stone, shafts of sunlight on the hills and moonlight on blue-grey slate. Religious symbolism is all-pervasive, implicit as well as explicit, not only in the stained-glass windows and pious prints, but in the fluted columns of the slate quarry standing like giant organ pipes, or the wind ruffling the water like the wing of God.

It's a strength of Emlyn's approach that he rejects any temptation to explain, any neat tying-up of loose ends. "I often dream in the past", the boy tells his mother. And maybe in the future, too, for the man who seems to be the boy's adult self, with the same troubled gaze, may only be a projection – forward from the boy, or backward from the old man whom we see in the opening sequence locked in an institution like his alter ego, the hounded child molester Em.

Any simple linear identification of the three figures is undercut by the final death by drowning: a cleansing from sin, a symbolic marriage with the dead, or a surrender to elemental forces, it calls into question everything that has preceded it. By refusing to resolve its own ambiguities, *One Full Moon* retains its emotional grip right to the end – and beyond, haunting the memory.

Philip Kemp

V.I. Warshawski

Certificate
15

Distributor
Warner Bros

Production Companies
Hollywood Pictures
In association with
Silver Screen
Partners IV
A Chestnut Hill
production

Executive Producers
Penney Finkelman
Cox

Co-executive Producers
John P. Marsh

Producers
John Bard Manulis
Lauren C. Weissman

Producer
Jeffrey Lurie

Co-producer
Doug Claybourne

Production Associate
Ron Marryott

Production Co-ordinators
Susan Spencer
Robbins

Unit Production Managers
Joseph P. Kane

2nd Unit Director
Glenn Randall Jnr

Casting
Glenn Daniels

Extras:
Central Casting
Chicago Extras:

Location Managers
Veronique Vowell

Costume Supervisors
Nancy McArdle
Chuck Velasco

Costumers
Oda Groeschel

2nd Unit:
Eileen McCahill

Make-up Artists
Key:

Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title

Supervising Sound Editors
Tom McCarthy
Roxanne Jones

Sound Editors
William G. Hartman
Gary Krivacek

ADR Editor
R.J. Kizer

Sound Recordist
David Kelson

Sound Re-recordists
Peter Reale
Howard Wilmarth

Production Assistants
Jodi Bracken
Christopher M. Connors

Stunt Co-ordinator
Michael Runyard

Production Music Editor
Tom Carlin

Songs
"Sittin' on Top of the World" by Renee Geyer, James Rayne, "Ooh Wah Ooh" by Barbara Jordan, Carl Sealove, Gary Tigerman, performed by Saundra "Pan" Alexander; "El Son de la Manta" by Alfredo Lopez, Fernando Natarén, Abel Rocha, performed by Quetzalcoatl

Costume Design
Gloria Gresham

Costume Supervisors
Nancy McArdle
Chuck Velasco

Costumers
Oda Groeschel

2nd Unit:
Eileen McCahill

Make-up Artists
Key:

Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title

Supervising Sound Editors
Tom McCarthy
Roxanne Jones

Sound Editors
William G. Hartman
Gary Krivacek

ADR Editor
R.J. Kizer

Sound Recordist
David Kelson

Sound Re-recordists
Peter Reale
Howard Wilmarth

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Christopher M. Connors

Stunt Co-ordinator
Michael Runyard

Production Music Editor
Tom Carlin

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Costume Design
Gloria Gresham

Costume Supervisors
Nancy McArdle
Chuck Velasco

Costumers
Oda Groeschel

2nd Unit:
Eileen McCahill

Make-up Artists
Key:

Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title

Supervising Sound Editors
Tom McCarthy
Roxanne Jones

Sound Editors
William G. Hartman
Gary Krivacek

ADR Editor
R.J. Kizer

Sound Recordist
David Kelson

Sound Re-recordists
Peter Reale
Howard Wilmarth

Production Assistants
Jodi Bracken
Christopher M. Connors

Stunt Co-ordinator
Michael Runyard

Production Illustrators
Petko Kadiev
Tim Braniff

Special Effects Co-ordinator
John Frazier

Music
Randy Edelman

Music Extract
"Waltz in G Flat Major", Opus 70, No.1 by Fryderyk Chopin, performed by Eugene Ormandy, The Philadelphia Orchestra

Music Editor
Tom Carlin

Songs
"Sittin' on Top of the World" by Renee Geyer, James Rayne, "Ooh Wah Ooh" by Barbara Jordan, Carl Sealove, Gary Tigerman, performed by Saundra "Pan" Alexander; "El Son de la Manta" by Alfredo Lopez, Fernando Natarén, Abel Rocha, performed by Quetzalcoatl

Costume Design
Gloria Gresham

Costume Supervisors
Nancy McArdle
Chuck Velasco

Costumers
Oda Groeschel

2nd Unit:
Eileen McCahill

Make-up Artists
Key:

Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title

Supervising Sound Editors
Tom McCarthy
Roxanne Jones

Sound Editors
William G. Hartman
Gary Krivacek

ADR Editor
R.J. Kizer

Sound Recordist
David Kelson

Sound Re-recordists
Peter Reale
Howard Wilmarth

Production Assistants
Jodi Bracken
Christopher M. Connors

Stunt Co-ordinator
Michael Runyard

Production Music Editor
Tom Carlin

Songs
"Sittin' on Top of the World" by Renee Geyer, James Rayne, "Ooh Wah Ooh" by Barbara Jordan, Carl Sealove, Gary Tigerman, performed by Saundra "Pan" Alexander; "El Son de la Manta" by Alfredo Lopez, Fernando Natarén, Abel Rocha, performed by Quetzalcoatl

Costume Design
Gloria Gresham

Costume Supervisors
Nancy McArdle
Chuck Velasco

Costumers
Oda Groeschel

2nd Unit:
Eileen McCahill

Make-up Artists
Key:

Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title

Supervising Sound Editors
Tom McCarthy
Roxanne Jones

Sound Editors
William G. Hartman
Gary Krivacek

ADR Editor
R.J. Kizer

Sound Recordist
David Kelson

Sound Re-recordists
Peter Reale
Howard Wilmarth

Production Assistants
Jodi Bracken
Christopher M. Connors

Stunt Co-ordinator
Michael Runyard

Production Music Editor
Tom Carlin

Songs
"Sittin' on Top of the World" by Renee Geyer, James Rayne, "Ooh Wah Ooh" by Barbara Jordan, Carl Sealove, Gary Tigerman, performed by Saundra "Pan" Alexander; "El Son de la Manta" by Alfredo Lopez, Fernando Natarén, Abel Rocha, performed by Quetzalcoatl

Costume Design
Gloria Gresham

Costume Supervisors
Nancy McArdle
Chuck Velasco

Costumers
Oda Groeschel

2nd Unit:
Eileen McCahill

Make-up Artists
Key:

Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title

Supervising Sound Editors
Tom McCarthy
Roxanne Jones

Sound Editors
William G. Hartman
Gary Krivacek

ADR Editor
R.J. Kizer

Sound Recordist
David Kelson

Sound Re-recordists
Peter Reale
Howard Wilmarth

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Jodi Bracken
Christopher M. Connors

Stunt Co-ordinator
Michael Runyard

Stunts

Cheryl Wheeler-Dixon
Kerrie Cullen
Greg Barnett
Gil Combs

Eddie J. Fernandez
Mark Harper
Lane Leavitt
Stacy Logan

Charles Picerni Jnr
Danny Rogers
Lori Lynn Ross
Ken Blazer

Doc Duhamel
James Fierro
Jeff Imada
Rick LeFevour

Manny Perry
Randy Popplewell
Timothy P. Trella
Scott Wilder

Marine Co-ordinator
Chicago:

Helicopter Pilots
Ross H. Reynolds
Robert "Bobby Z" Zajonc

Cast
Kathleen Turner
Victoria I. Warshawski

Jay O. Sanders
Murray Ryerson

Charles Durning
Lieutenant Mallory

Angela Goethals
Kat Grafalk

Nancy Paul
Paige Grafalk

Frederick Coffin
Horton Grafalk

Charles McCaughan
Trumble Grafalk

Stephen Meadows
Boom-Boom Grafalk

Wayne Knight
Smeissen

Lynnie Godfrey
Sal

Anne Pitoniak
Dr Lotty Henschel

Stephen Root
Mickey

Robert Clotworthy
Phillip Pugh

Tom Allard
Big Eddie

Michael G. Hagerty
Babe

Lee Arenberg
Flesh

Michael Bacarella
Cabbie

John Beasley
Ernie

Everett Smith
McGraw

Herb Muller
Contreras

Theresa Bell
Stacy

Geof Prysirr
Ron Whortley

Sandra Foster
Bank Teller

Gregg Almquist
Bank Manager

Gene Hartline
Gary Epper

John P. Marsh
Striker

Shirley Johnson
Singer

Victor Herold
Bassist

Casey Jones
Drummer

Professor Eddie Lusk
Keyboardist

Maurice Vaughn
Guitarist

Aaron Seville
Paramedic

Doris Le Gras
Maid

John Fujioka
Sumitara

Roger T. Ito
Robert Wong

Bodyguards

7,988 feet

89 minutes

USA 1991

Director: Jeff Kanew

Chicago. Private detective Victoria I. Warshawski visits a bar in an attempt to extricate herself from an antagonistic relationship with reporter Murray Ryerson. She meets Bernard Grafalk, an ex-hockey player who is a partner in a shipping company, and they agree to date sometime. Later that evening, Bernard appears in V.I.'s apartment and asks her to babysit his thirteen-year-old daughter Kat while he attends a meeting with Horton and Trumble, his brothers and business partners.

At the boatyard, Bernard is killed in a suspicious explosion and Kat, whose mother Paige is now married to Horton, hires V.I. to find out who murdered him. V.I. uncovers evidence to suggest that Trumble, who is trying to keep control of the strike-plagued company, was in dispute with Bernard. Although warned off the case by her policeman father's best friend Lieutenant Mallory and by local crime boss Smeissen, V.I. digs deep and discovers that the Grafalk company is failing badly. Even if Bernard's proxy vote (which has passed to Kat but will go to Paige and Horton if they obtain custody of the girl) enables the selling-off of the company, this would not be enough to clear the family's debts.

When thugs try to kidnap Kat, V.I. rescues the girl and they escape in a speedboat. V.I. discovers that a Japanese consortium hopes to convert the Grafalk company's lakefront properties into a billion-dollar real-estate development, and that the land is owned by Kat, thanks to a bequest from her grandfather. Meanwhile, Kat has decided to conduct her own investigations by going undercover at her mother's. V.I. rushes to the docks to find Horton on the point of staging a drowning incident with the drugged Kat. Murray intervenes and is shot and wounded by Horton, who is then shot and killed by Paige, who proceeds with the drowning. V.I. rescues Kat from the water and shoots Paige dead, winning congratulations from Murray and Mallory.

V.I. Warshawski was evidently initially conceived as the first of a series of adaptations of Sara Paretsky's novels (although not credited as such, this one is derived from *Indemnity Only*, which introduced hardboiled feminist sleuth V.I. in 1982), since it contains as many extraneous characters, set-up sequences and dangling mysteries as a TV series pilot. Under-exploited characters like Murray, Mallory and Smeissen are obviously set up to become series regulars, while the

sketchy details of V.I.'s background are clearly intended to be filled out in subsequent entries.

Unfortunately, Jeff Kanew's direction and the skimpy production values are also redolent of television, and this static and conventional film never manages to stretch the private-eye format. With a high-speed boat chase serving as the only notable action sequence, and too many scenes in which people sit around discussing the plot or their relationships, *V.I. Warshawski* drags despite its abbreviated running time. Given the film's disappointing showing at the US box office, sequels are unlikely to be forthcoming, which is unfortunate since later Paretsky titles, such as *Bitter Medicine* and *Blood Shot*, offer more promising and unusual material.

Kathleen Turner is eminently suited to the role of V.I., a private eye who has reached the age "when thirty is a fond memory" and whose character quirks liven up the proceedings considerably. Her various confrontations with suspects and witnesses also add interest, whether she is cracking wise (when Horton boasts that he's had sex with over 500 women, she sneers, "Still not got the hang of it, huh?") or using simpering charm to coax vital information out of some unfortunate dupe.

Neither a transsexual Philip Marlowe nor a feminist superwoman, V.I. has a few smart wrinkles of her own in the self-defence stakes. She tackles a thug with a handy light bulb and threatens an officious lawyer with the disconnection of his computer. However, she is saddled with the bratty Kat for most of the story, and given too few chances to use her *aikido* or deductive reasoning by a film that does not really know what to do with its central character.

Kim Newman



Skimped, not stretched: Kathleen Turner

Alive and Kicking

Distributor
BBC TV
Production Company
BBC Films
For Screen One
In association with
Crucial Films
Executive Producer
Richard Broke
Producer
David M. Thompson
Production Associate
Joanna Gueritz
Location Manager
Christine McMurrich
Casting
Anne Henderson
Assistant Directors
Liz Trubridge
Clare Nicholson
Beni Turkson
Screenplay
Al Hunter
Director of Photography
Nigel Walters
In colour
Camera Operator
Simon Maggs
Visual Effects Designer
Malcolm James
Graphic Designer
Bill Wilson
Editor
Ken Pearce
Production Designer
Grenville Horner
Music
Philip Appleby
Mykael S. Riley
Music Performed by
The Reggae
Philharmonic
Orchestra
Songs
"Small Axe", "Fussing and Fighting" by and performed by Bob Marley and the Wailers
Costume Design
Laura Ergis
Make-up
Jan Sewell
Sound Editor
Bronwen Lannon
Sound Recordist
Richard Boulter
Sound Re-recordist
Ron Edmonds
Technical Adviser
Peter Martin
Production Assistants
Marissa Cowell
Jacqui Doyle
Stunt Arranger
Gareth Milne

Cast
Lenny Henry
Stevie "Smudger" Smith
Robbie Coltrane
Liam Kane
Annabelle Apsion
Marie Smith
Imogen Boorman
Hayley Forbes-Clinton
Geff Francis
Barry Serradilla
Paul Barber
Earl Preston
Jane Horrocks
Gail
Cal Macaninch
Axle
Beresford Le Roy
Leroy
Hakeem Kae-Kazim
Jerome
Mark A. Newman
Dexter
Ewen Cummins
Clyde
Faith Tingle
Shirley
Garry Roost
Alan
Karl Tessler
Michael
Jonathan Copestake
Derek
Justine Glenton
Jackie
Andy Hockley
Ray
Nick Dunning
David Freeman
Fintan McKeown
Doctor
Jillie Meers
Midwife
Shireen Shah
Nursing Officer
Al Ashton
Sergeant Tocknell
Sakuntala Ramanee
Female Social Worker
Justin Chadwick
Martin
Cecilia Marquis
Jenny

8,550 feet
95 minutes

United Kingdom 1991

Director: Robert Young

Stevie "Smudger" Smith is a prime mover in a highly organised drugs ring. When a rival steps out of line, it is Smudger who takes a broken bottle to his face, even as his wife gives birth to a son, Jason. Both Smudger and Marie are heroin addicts, and the baby is born with withdrawal symptoms. Marie resolves to go cold turkey for the sake of the child, but Smudger cynically makes no effort to help her. Jason's poor health concerns the social services, and when Marie starts using again, the baby is taken into care. Marie turns to a drugs counsellor, Liam, who places her in a rehabilitation clinic, out of her husband's reach.

Liam, a big, tough-talking Scot, makes up in panache what he lacks in finesse. When Smudger threatens him with a knife, Liam first disarms, then floors him. The next day, Smudger is surprised to be released without charge. Liam picks him up and offers to help him kick his habit – that way he may get his family back. Smudger is unimpressed, and successfully tracks down Marie through his own contacts. However, she warns him off: she will not allow him to jeopardise her chances of custody. Liam arrives and she is escorted to another secret location.

Reluctantly, Smudger joins Liam's counselling group, but his snide and callous attitude upsets the others. Eventually, Liam takes him outside and beats him up. When a firebomb subsequently destroys the baby's room in his house, Smudger decides to get out of drugs for good. He kicks the habit by adopting a strenuous fitness régime. He was once on the books of the local football club, which prompts him to propose to Liam that they establish a football team for the addicts. Liam persuades Earl, the club's manager, to set up a training programme, and 'Junkies United' prepare for their first match.

But old rivals call at Smudger's house with an axe, and he and Liam run for their lives. Smudger's leg is injured, and he is pulled from the following day's match. The Junkies' goalie shows up stoned with his girlfriend. But the team is still winning when Liam and Smudger discover the girl collapsed on the dressing-room floor. They attempt to revive her, but it is too late. Marie and Jason arrive and comfort Smudger, and the family is reunited.

On the face of it, an earnest, even provocative BBC play, *Alive and Kicking* mostly succeeds in disguising its own shortcomings. The opening sequence is a fair example of the film's basic tactical ploy: shock treatment. Smudger's raid on a ►

◀ drugs rival is cross-cut with his wife's labour pains, so that a vicious lunge with a broken bottle climaxes with his son's birth and the mother's cry "Bastard!". The scene is all the more shocking for the casting of Lenny Henry: home from Hollywood back to the bosom of Auntie, our favourite comedian is scarred and surly, stripped of the bonhomie and bouncing vivacity that make him one of a kind. Henry reveals a surprising range here: we knew he could play WASP, but this dead-eyed bully boy is something new.

Robbie Coltrane's tough, extravagant drugs counsellor is less of a surprise, but no less impressive in itself. Certainly the pairing of the two 'alternative' comedians sets up expectations which the film subverts (although their very presence was enough to qualify the play as a 'comedy drama' in some quarters). Such wisecracks as punctuate the admirably terse dialogue do nothing to disrupt the dramatic tension. The pity is that the potential for a nice black comedy has been lost in the process. Impressive as the duo's restraint is, they are still conspicuously star turns. The sub-text might read: Lenny and Robbie earn their spurs by going straight.

Ditto Smudger and Liam. An end title informs us that the play is "inspired by Carlton Athletic, formed in Glasgow for young drug addicts". But with no reference to racial or social or economic factors (informed that there are no resources to run a group-counselling session, Liam responds, "I'm our resources"), in fact with no specific context at all, the film actually has less to do with drugs than with masculinity. It's a film about the unfit father (two, as Liam finally admits) and the absent family, about Smudger's rehabilitation in a subtly unexpected sense. The crime in that opening sequence is not an act of violence, but an act of omission: Smudger's failure to attend the birth of his child. It is only when he has learned the value of human life that he merits a wife and child. When they return, he is in tears.

Smudger is reborn, a new man, but the bulk of the play articulates a deep suspicion of such attendant (emasculating?) baggage as liberal platitudes, group therapy, non-violence. Significantly, Marie is off-screen for most of the time, and this is a remarkably sexless film. The way is clear for the bonding of Liam and Smudger, a process which climaxes in Liam's own intimate confession of past inadequacy and a contrived threat from an axe-wielding drugs gang. *Alive and Kicking* works hard to reject one set of clichés only to substitute the latest, 'Iron John' variety.

Tom Charity

A Question of Attribution

Distributor
BBC TV
Production Company
BBC Films
For Screen One
In association with
WGBH/Boston
Executive Producer
Richard Broke
Producer
Innes Lloyd
Production Associate
Ian Hopkins
Production Supervisor
John Wood
Production Manager
Daphne Phipps
Casting
Davis & Zimmermann
Anne Hopkinson
Assistant Directors
Peter Stenning
Tim Stevenson
Theresa Macinnis
Screenplay
Alan Bennett
Based on his own play
Director of Photography
John Hooper
In colour
Camera Operator
Robert Pascall
Graphic Designer
Christine Buttner
Editor
Mark Day
Production Designer
Barbara Gosnold
Music
Gerald Gouret
Costume Design
Amy Roberts
Make-up Designer
Daphne Croker-Saunders
Sound Editor
Julie Buckland
Sound Recordist
Aad Wirtz

Cast
James Fox
Sir Anthony Blunt
Gregory Floy
Radiologist
Geoffrey Palmer
Donleavy
David Calder
Chubb
Prunella Scales
HMQ
Edward De Souza
Collins
Jason Flemyng
Colin
John Cater
Restorer (Robertson)
Richard Bebb
Consultant
Ann Beach
Mrs Chubb
Julia St John
Receptionist
Mark Payton
Phillips
Anne Jameson
Miss Bracewell
Barbara Hicks
County Lady

6,300 feet
70 minutes

United Kingdom 1991

Director: John Schlesinger

The late 70s. Chubb, an MI5 officer, is assigned to the case of Sir Anthony Blunt, Surveyor of the Queen's Pictures and Director of the Courtauld Institute of Art, who has been granted immunity from prosecution for past activities as a Soviet spy. In between art-history lectures and supervision of restoration work on "Titian and His Friends", a group portrait in the Queen's collection formerly attributed to Titian himself, Chubb shows Blunt photographs of suspected spies, hoping in vain that he will name names. Chubb also begins to take an interest in art history; at the National Gallery, Blunt explains the symbols in Titian's "Allegory of Prudence".

Donleavy, Chubb's MI5 boss, meets Blunt secretly and asks him guardedly how the investigation is proceeding. One afternoon, Blunt takes a Courtauld Institute pupil, Phillips, to Buckingham Palace, to help remove the fake Titian for further work. HMQ, at a loose end after a swimming-pool opening has been cancelled, wanders into the gallery; Phillips and a palace guard scatter, leaving Blunt to converse uncomfortably about paintings, the supposed ability of portraits to reveal secret lives, and the peculiar interest people show in forgeries.

At another secret meeting, Donleavy explains that there is now too much talk to prevent Blunt's spying activities from being made public; Donleavy himself remains in the clear. Blunt visits his doctor, who asks the question everyone asks about the Queen - "What is she really like?" - and confirms that Blunt's X-rays show no recurrence of a recent illness. Meanwhile, other X-rays have revealed a fourth and a fifth figure lurking under the paint of "Titian and His Friends". Blunt is openly named as a spy - the "fourth man" after Burgess, Maclean and Philby. He packs his books, and leaves the Courtauld Institute to face the media on the doorstep.

● A Question of Attribution reaches the television screen by the reverse route of *An Englishman Abroad*, Alan Bennett's companion play about Coral Browne's meeting with the exiled Soviet spy Guy Burgess. *Englishman* was written directly for BBC Television, and made its stage debut in Bennett's 1988 double bill, "Single Spies"; *Attribution* formed the evening's other half.

The two points of origin - television screenplay, theatre text - only go some way towards explaining the differences between the two films. *Englishman* had at its centre

Alan Bates' likeable portrayal of the shambling, drunken Burgess, marooned in his dingy Moscow flat with a Jack Buchanan record and fond, distant memories of London's social whirl. *Attribution* features a forbidding cold fish, Sir Anthony Blunt, tilting his nose at some imagined bad odour, gliding with his upper-class drawl through marbled halls.

James Fox phrases his lines with greater comic precision than Bennett himself managed on stage; yet his inner feelings remain hidden. As the disgraced Blunt confronts the cameras outside the Courtauld Institute in the final shots, Fox's frozen face reveals nothing. Bennett has written that he finds it "hard to get worked up about Blunt's treachery", which is fair enough; but there is a real danger in passing on such impassivity to the audience.

The greatest difference between the two films - both made by the team of John Schlesinger and producer Innes Lloyd (a Bennett stalwart who died during post-production) - lies in their intention. *Englishman* was an ebullient character piece; *Attribution* is a coolly collected play of ideas, topped off by a cabaret turn from HMQ (the Windsor cadences impersonated immaculately by Prunella Scales).

By allowing us to see Blunt's canvasses at close quarters, Schlesinger's camera strengthens the metaphoric bond between the restoration work on the fake Titian and the process of unmasking Blunt the human fake - Establishment pillar and traitor. Bennett's screen adaptation widens the metaphor by including scenes with a radiologist and doctor, checking the restoration work on Blunt's insides. These add more to the mix than Bennett's other addition - the distracting figure of Donleavy, an MI5 boss with secrets of his own.

The play's hard core, however, remains in the exchange between Blunt and HMQ in a picture gallery at Buckingham Palace. The words are unaltered: chirruping comments about Commonwealth travels; double-edged remarks about forgeries going undetected because of their background, pedigree, and the experts' seal of approval. Constantly switching between the two figures, Schlesinger loses some of the humour; but enough remains. Elsewhere - barring a ponderous cut from the ear of a hidden figure in the fake Titian to the ear of Chubb, the MI5 bloodhound from Purley - Schlesinger weaves a tidy path through Bennett's script. Would that ends and means were so neatly fused in his Hollywood ventures.

Geoff Brown

Video

Mark Kermode reviews every rental/rental premiere video released this month and William Green reviews every retail/retail premiere video

★ Highlights

Reviews in **Monthly Film Bulletin (MFB)** and **Sight and Sound** are cited in parentheses

Rental

The Adventures of Milo and Otis (Koneko Monogatari)

MCEG Virgin MVP 973
Japan 1986

Certificate U Director Masanori Hata
Strange kid's film with a cat and a dog enduring endless indignities in the pursuit of fun. Commentary by Dudley Moore. (S&S August 1991)

After Dark, My Sweet

MCEG Virgin MVP 973
USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director James Foley
★ Spellbinding adaptation of Jim Thompson's darkly erotic novel. Jason Patric excels as a young ex-boxer trapped in a web of deceit. Bruce Dern in his finest performance since *Silent Running*. (S&S August 1991)

Close My Eyes

Artificial Eye ART 901
UK 1991

Certificate 18
Director Stephen Poliakoff
Risqué tale of incestuous love told with a resolute lack of prurience. Saskia Reeves and Alan Rickman lead the sturdy cast. (S&S September 1991)

The Godfather Part III

CIC VHB 2514
USA 1990

Certificate 15
Director Francis Ford Coppola
★ An extravagant, operatic climax to Coppola's Mafia trilogy. Al Pacino is marvelous but upstart Andy Garcia steals the show. This is the director's cut and is nine minutes longer than the cinema release. (MFB No. 687)

L.A. Story

Guild 8653
USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Mick Jackson
★ Fantasy, romance and sharp satire blend in this comedy. British director Jackson perfectly captures the crazy atmosphere of LA, and Steve Martin has never been better. (S&S May 1991)

Out for Justice

Warner East 12219
USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director John Flynn
Bandy-legged action man Steven Seagal saves the innocent from



The don is dead, long live...

fiendish villains. Great fight sequences, but the rest is lacking. (S&S December 1991)

Reunion (L'Ami retrouvé)

RCA Columbia 13237
France/West Germany/UK 1989

Certificate 15 Director Jerry Schatzberg
Worthy but long-winded drama about a Jewish New York lawyer returning to Germany after years of exile. Uneven screenplay from Harold Pinter. (MFB No. 678)

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II: The Secret of the Ooze

FoxVideo 1921
USA 1991

Certificate PG
Director Michael Pressman
Violence is officially off the agenda in this insipid sequel to Golden Harvest's surprise hit. Deadily dull. (S&S August 1991)

Truly, Madly, Deeply

Buena Vista D541102
UK 1990

Certificate PG
Director Anthony Minghella
★ A woman's dead lover returns to complete his unfinished domestic affairs. A TV movie that provides a touching twist on the standard ghost story. (S&S October 1991)

Where Angels Fear to Tread

20.20 NVT 12974
UK 1991

Certificate PG
Director Charles Sturridge
Neatly pressed adaptation of E.M. Forster's novel which irons out all the source's ambiguities, producing little more than a laundry list of lovers' tiffs. (S&S July 1991)

White Fang

Walt Disney D101022
USA 1990

Certificate PG Director Randal Kleiser

Neutered retelling of Jack London's 1905 novel which lacks any real bite. (S&S June 1991)

Rental premiere

The Amityville Curse

20.20 MVP 888
USA 1989

Certificate 18 Director Tom Berry
Producer Franco Battista Screenplay Michael Krueger, Norvell Rose, based on the novel by Hans Holzer Lead Actors Kim Coates, Dana Wightman, Helen Hughes, David Steins
87 minutes

More tenants move into the haunted house – seemingly the only people alive who know nothing of its history!

Born to Ride

Warner PEV 12060
USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Graham Baker
Producers Fred Weintraub, Sandra Weintraub Screenplay Michael Pardridge, Janice Hickley Lead Actors John Stamos, John Stockwell, Teri Polo 86 minutes
Stamos plays a young tearaway biker enlisted to train soldiers to become lethal motorcyclists.

Caged Fury

RCA Columbia CVT 12568
USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director Bill Milling
Producer Bob Gallagher Screenplay Bill Milling Lead Actors Erick Estrada, Richie Barath, Roxanne Michaels
90 minutes
Soft-core sleaze set in a women's prison and starring *CHiPs* heart-throb Erick Estrada.

Cry in the Wild

Capital CHV 1021
USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Charles Correll
Producer Ron Gilbert Screenplay Durrell Royce Crays Lead Actors David Morse, Megan Follows, Dion Anderson, Tom Atkins, David Soul 90 minutes
★ Tense, true story about a girl's abduction by a reclusive hillbilly. Morse is great, Follows resembles Linda Blair in her prime, and David Soul appears only fleetingly – a winning combination!

Desert Law

RCA Columbia CVT 140367
Italy/USA Year unknown

Certificate 15 Director Duccio Tessari
Producers Pio Angeletti, Adriano de

Micheli *Screenplay* Adriano Bolzoni, Sergio Donati, Luigi Montefiori *Lead Actors* Rutger Hauer, Carol Alt, Omar Sharif, Elliott Gould 86 minutes
Dated action-adventure featuring a boyish Rutger Hauer and a bloated Omar Sharif.

Dragonfight

Warner 35390
USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director Warren Stevens
Producers Michael Kossack, Mitchell Calder *Screenplay* Budd Lewis *Lead Actors* Robert Z'Dar, Michael Pare, Joe Pare, Paul Coufos 80 minutes
Z'Dar is a futuristic warrior who fights gladiator battles for the entertainment of slimy businessmen.

Dragonfire

CIC VHA 1518
USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Richard T. Heffron *Executive Producer* Andrew Mirisch *Screenplay* Peter S. Fischer, Richard T. Heffron, Janis Diamond *Lead Actors* Daniel J. Travanti, Roxanne Hart, Peter Michael, Peter Michael Goetz 85 minutes
Run-of-the-mill TV thriller, jollied along by Daniel Travanti, about an ex-soldier uncovering hidden truths.

Edge of Honour

High Fliers/First Generation FG1001
USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Michael Spence
Producers Peter Garrity, Jay B. Davis, David O'Malley *Screenplay* Mark Rosenbaum, Michael Spence, David O'Malley *Lead Actors* Corey Feldman, Meredith Salenger, Scott Reeves, Ken Jenkins, Don Swayze 88 minutes
★ A group of explorer scouts come across a stash of weapons and are hounded through a rainforest by fiendish arms-smugglers. A great action movie with a gung-ho performance by Don Swayze.

The Flash II:

Revenge of the Trickster

Warner PEV 12334
USA 1991

Certificate PG Director Danny Bilson
Producer Gail Morgan Hickman *Screenplay* Howard Chaykin, John Francis Moore *Lead Actors* John Wesley Shipp, Amanda Pays, Alex Desert 88 minutes
High-class, live-action thrills from this upmarket TV adaptation of the evergreen comic-strip hero.

He Said, She Said

CIC VHB 2545
USA 1991

Certificate 15 Directors Ken Kwapis, Marisa Silver *Producer* Frank Mancuso

Jnr *Screenplay* Brian Hohlfeld
Lead Actors Kevin Bacon, Elizabeth Perkins 111 minutes

Conflicting accounts of a blossoming relationship (the male viewpoint directed by Kwapis, the female by Silver) are looked at in this flawed comedy about gender difference.

Killing Streets

VPD AMP 101
USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Stephen Cornwell *Producer* Menaham Golan
Screenplay Stephen Cornwell, Andrew Deutsch *Lead Actors* Michael Pare, Lorenzo Lamas, Jennifer Runyon 109 minutes
A twin brother infiltrates enemy lines in search of his abducted sibling in a standard action-pic.

King of the Hill

Palace PVC 2202R
USA 1990

Certificate TBC Director Robin B. Armstrong *Producers* Eric Tynan Young, Robin B. Armstrong
Screenplay D.M. Eyre Jnr *Lead Actors* William Russ, Glenn Plummer, Noble Willingham, Jeffrey Tambor 91 minutes

★ Upbeat baseball drama. An ageing pitcher (Russ in fine form) takes on a new black recruit and teaches him all he knows with heart-warming consequences. Good script, solid performances, and an endearing sense of nostalgia.

Leather Jackets

Medusa MC 328
USA 1991

Certificate 18 Director Lee Drysdale
Producer Cassian Elwes *Screenplay* Lee Drysdale *Lead Actors* Bridget Fonda, Cary Elwes, D.B. Sweeney, Christopher Penn 90 minutes
★ A dark and seductive adult rites-of-passage movie about two teenage boys and a feisty young woman fighting to break the boundaries of their small-town lives. Photographed in hues of steel-blue and deep-red, Drysdale's tale casts a hypnotic spell. A real find.

The Lookalike

CIC VHA 1512
USA 1990

Certificate 15 Director Gary Nelson
Producer Lilliam Gallo *Screenplay* Linda Bergman, Martin Tahse *Lead Actors* Melissa Gilbert-Brinkman, Diane Ladd 88 minutes
Initially intriguing but eventually tiresome psycho-thriller about a woman plagued by her *doppelgänger* and an apparition of her dead child. Diane Ladd is hysterically OTT as a neurotic mother, but there are a few chilling moments.

Menu for Murder

Capital CHV 1020
USA 1991

Certificate PG Director Larry Pearce
Producer Susan Weber-Gold *Screenplay* Duane Poole, Tom Swale, based on the novel by Valerie Wolzien *Lead Actors* Morgan Fairchild, Marla Gibbs, Joan Van Ark, Cindy Williams 89 minutes
TV murder-mystery. A detective interviews seven women in connection with the killing of a school president - only to find that the suspects are being killed off one by one.

Mission of the Shark

20.20 CVT 14118
USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Robert Iscove
Producer Richard Maynard *Screenplay* Alan Sharp *Lead Actors* Stacy Keach, Richard Thomas, Carrie Snodgrass, Steve Landesberg 114 minutes
Drama based on the 1945 sinking of the USS *Indianapolis*, some of whose crew was devoured by sharks. Subsequent political cover-ups are tortuously unravelled.

Murder 101

CIC VHA 1511
USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Bill Condon
Producer Oscar L. Costo *Screenplay* Bill Condon, Roy Johansen *Lead Actors* Pierce Brosnan, Dey Young 88 minutes
A writer encourages his students to pen thrillers and becomes embroiled in a plot against himself. Nice idea spoilt by nondescript execution.

Murderous Vision

CIC VHB 2529
USA 1991

Certificate 15 Director Gary Sherman
Producer Johanna Persons *Screenplay* Paul Joseph Gulino *Lead Actors* Buca Boxleitner, Laura Johnson, Joseph d'Angerio, Glenn Plummer 89 minutes
Plodding psycho-thriller from the director of *Poltergeist III*, about a cop going in search of a vicious serial killer. Extravagant mish-mash.

Psycho IV: The Beginning

CIC VHA 1497
USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director Mick Garris
Producers George Zaloom, Les Mayfield *Screenplay* Joseph Stefano *Lead Actors* Anthony Perkins, Olivia Hussey, Henry Thomas 92 minutes
Having exhausted all other avenues, the saga continues by jumping back in time to Norman Bates' first matricidal mishap. Garris pulls out all the stops and conjures a few moments of homicidal fun.

Quest for the Mighty Sword

VPD AMP 101
USA 1991

Certificate PG Director David Hills
Producer Haven Gottacloo *Screenplay* David Hills *Lead Actors* Eric Allen Kramer, Margaret Lenzeny, Donal O'Brien 90 minutes
Childish tales of swords and magic. Altor struggles to prevent Thorn from wielding the sacred sword.

Riding the Edge

EV EVV 1208
USA 1989

Certificate 15 Director James Fargo
Producer Wolf Schmidt *Screenplay* Ronald A. Suppa *Lead Actors* Rachel Sbarge, Catherine Mary Stewart, Peter Haskell 99 minutes
A young man sets out to free his scientist father from terrorist kidnappers intent upon gaining control of an orbital satellite.

Runaway Father

Odyssey 307
USA 1991

Certificate PG Director John Nicolella
Producer Lee Levinson *Screenplay* Stephanie Liss, based on the book by Richard Rashke *Lead Actors* Donna Mills, Jack Scalia, Chris Mulkey, Jenny Lewis 91 minutes
A destitute mother attempts to bring her errant husband to justice and make him pay for abandoning their family.

Separate But Equal

Odyssey OBY 306
USA 1991

Certificate PG Director George Stevens Jnr
Executive Producers George Stevens Jnr, Stan Margulies *Screenplay* George Stevens Jnr *Lead Actors* Sidney Poitier, Burt Lancaster, Richard Kiley 196 minutes
★ Powerful TV mini-series set in South Carolina in the 50s concerning the struggle for racial equality. Good performances.

Ski School

First Independent VA 20142
USA 1990

Certificate 18 Director/Producer Damian Lee *Screenplay* David Mitchell
Lead Actors Dean Cameron, Tom Breznahan, Stuart Fratkin 85 minutes
Despite the winter setting, the 'babes' flounce around in bikinis in this mountain-resort romp.

Soda Cracker

RCA Columbia CVT 12871
USA 1989

Certificate 15 Director/Producer Fred Williamson *Screenplay* Jarron Summers *Lead Actors* Fred

Williamson, Maud Adams, Bo Svenson 90 minutes
An honest (but strangely nicknamed) cop traces his partner's murderers to his own department.

Stroke of Midnight

Buena Vista DS 40892
USA 1991

Certificate PG Director Tom Clegg
Producer Monique Annaud Screenplay Timothy Prager, from the original screenplay by Pamela Wallace
Lead Actors Rob Lowe, Jennifer Grey, Andrea Ferreol 87 minutes
Paris-bound romantic fantasy. A woman wins the attentions of a fashion designer via a Cinderella-like magical transformation.

Sweet Revenge

Buena Vista DS 40882
USA 1991

Certificate PG Director Charlotte Brandstrom Producer Monique Annaud Screenplay Janet Brownwell
Lead Actors Rosanna Arquette, Carrie Fisher, John Sessions 84 minutes
A woman attempts to side-step alimony payments to her ex-husband by marrying him off to the perfect woman. An innocuous romantic comedy.

Vestige of Honour

CIC VHA 1516
USA 1990

Certificate PG Director Jerry London
Executive Producers Dan Wigutow, Gerald McRaney Screenplay Steve Brown Lead Actors Gerald McRaney, Michael Gross 89 minutes
After seventeen years an American soldier returns to Vietnam to help some tribal people abandoned by Uncle Sam at the end of the war. Emotive and sanitised action movie.

The Whereabouts of Jenny

Odyssey ODY 305
USA 1991

Certificate PG Director/Producer Gene Reynolds Screenplay John Miglis Lead Actors Ed O'Neil, Debrah Farentino, Eve Gordon, Mike Farrell 95 minutes
TV melodrama about a man's legal battle to regain custody of his daughter who lives with his ex-wife and her suspected drug-dealer boyfriend.

Retail

The Angelic Conversation

ReVision MJ 009
UK 1985 Price £14.99

Certificate PG Director Derek Jarman
★ Using a variety of film techniques



Cut down: Gérard Depardieu in 'Danton'

and two actors, Jarman constructs mysterious visual images to counterpoint fourteen Shakespearean sonnets read by Judi Dench. (MFB No. 619)

The Big Blue

FoxVideo WC 5499
USA 1988 Price £19.99 (special edition)

Certificate 15 Director Luc Besson
★ The extended version of Besson's oceanic odyssey – lasting 168 minutes, nearly an hour longer than previous versions. Superb photography in and out of the water. (MFB No. 662)

The Big Man

Palace PVC 21625
UK 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director David Leland
Liam Neeson as a Glaswegian bare-knuckle boxer at odds with unemployment, the local gang and Joanne Whalley-Kilmer. (MFB No. 681)

Brubaker

FoxVideo 1188
USA 1980 Price £10.99

Certificate 15
Director Stuart Rosenberg
Companion piece to Rosenberg's first prison drama *Cool Hand Luke*, with Robert Redford as a reformist prison governor. (MFB No. 560)

Danton

Artificial Eye ART 016
France/Poland 1982 Price £15.99

Certificate PG Director Andrzej Wajda
★ Gérard Depardieu, brash and flamboyant as Danton, is cut down to size by Robespierre (Wojciech Pszoniak) during the 1794 Paris 'Terror'. Subtitles (MFB No. 596)

Enigma

Braveworld Premier STV 2064
UK/France 1982 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Jeannot Szwarc

Less than *Le Carré*. Martin Sheen as a spy trying to dodge KGB assassin Sam Neill. (MFB No. 590)

The Fabulous Baker Boys

MGM/UA PES 51692
USA 1989 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Steve Kloves
★ Two small-time piano players (Beau and Jeff Bridges) spice up their act with torch singer Michelle Pfeiffer. A familiar romance finely tuned. (MFB No. 674)

Ghost

CIC VHR 2496
USA 1990 Price £12.99

Certificate 15 Director Jerry Zucker
★ Spectre Patrick Swayze helps his girlfriend Demi Moore solve his murder. Whoopi Goldberg acts as the go-between medium. (MFB No. 681)

Goodbye, Mr Chips

MGM/UA PES 50687
UK 1969 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Herbert Ross
Musical remake of the sentimental classic, with Peter O'Toole and Petula Clark as Mrs Chips. (MFB No. 432)

Home Alone

FoxVideo 1866
USA 1990 Price £12.99

Certificate PG Director Chris Columbus
Macaulay Culkin charms as a boy unwittingly left to guard the family home against two incompetent burglars. Bomb-proof script from John Hughes. (MFB No. 684)

The Last Detail

Castle CVI 1318
USA 1973 Price £5.99

Certificate 18 Director Hal Ashby
Famously foul-mouthed film about two petty officers (Jack Nicholson and Otis Young) put in charge of a prison-bound Randy Quaid. (MFB No. 486)

Listening to Britain:

A Jennings Trilogy

Imperial War Museum COI
UK 1941/1942/1945 Price £18.50

Certificate E

Director Humphrey Jennings
★ Three classic wartime documentaries made for the Ministry of Information; *The Heart of Britain*, *Listen to Britain* and *A Diary for Timothy*. Poetry, patriotism and propaganda have seldom been so cunningly intertwined. B/W (MFB Nos. 86, 98, 146)

The Man from Laramie

Castle CVI 1322
USA 1955 Price £5.99

Certificate PG Director Anthony Mann
This is the fifth and final Western Mann made with James Stewart. A dark drama of vengeance and dynastic ambitions. (MFB No. 260)

Moonlighting

Braveworld STV 2065
UK 1982 Price £10.99

Certificate PG
Director Jerzy Skolimowski
Four Polish building workers in London experience the rigours of a depressed economy. Jeremy Irons is the foreman. (MFB No. 584)

Nuns on the Run

Fox Video 1830
UK 1990 Price £9.99

Certificate 15 Director Jonathan Lynn
One-gag caper comedy that relies on the spectacle of Eric Idle and Robbie Coltrane running around in black robes and wimples. (MFB No. 677)

Passion

Artificial Eye ART 018
France/Switzerland 1982 Price £15.99

Certificate 15 Director Jean-Luc Godard
★ Godard returns to his favourite film subject – the art of the cinema. Raoul Coutard collaborates on the stunning imagery. Subtitles (MFB No. 593)

Runners

Braveworld Premier STV 2066
UK 1983 Price £10.99

Certificate 15
Director Charles Sturridge
James Fox and Jane Asher join forces to search for their respective missing children. Stephen Poliakoff's script takes them to places they would prefer to avoid. (MFB No. 596)

Smooth Talk

Braveworld Premier STV 2067
USA 1985 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Joyce Chopra
Early starring role for Laura Dern as

a small-town teenager submitting to the attentions of a sidewalk Romeo (Treat Williams). (MFB No. 634)

Subway

FoxVideo WC 6969

France 1985 Price £15.99

Certificate 15 Director Luc Besson
Christopher Lambert seeks refuge with folk in the Paris metro after robbing Isabelle Adjani. Chic thriller. Subtitles (MFB No. 620)

Talk Radio

FoxVideo 2167

USA 1988 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director Oliver Stone
★ A phone-in radio host is murdered by the prejudices he inflames. Mesmerising performance by Eric Bogosian. (MFB No. 668)

Treasure Island

Warner PES 11743

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Fraser C. Heston
Pedestrian remake of a rollicking yarn, redeemed by cameos from Oliver Reed and Christopher Lee. (MFB No. 678)

An Unsuitable Job for a Woman

Braveworld Premier STV 2067

UK 1981 Price £10.99

Certificate 15
Director Christopher Petit
Adapted from a P. D. James novel, odd devices and strange desires are exposed when a young woman sets up as a private detective. (MFB No. 580)

The Verdict

FoxVideo 1188

USA 1982 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Sidney Lumet
★ Superior courtroom drama, scripted by David Mamet, in which venal lawyer Paul Newman takes the long road back to human dignity. (MFB No. 589)

Wild at Heart

Palace PVC 21623S

USA 1990 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director David Lynch
Lacking the coherence of *Blue Velvet*, Lynch's road movie seems more like a deranged spin-off episode of *Twin Peaks*. Laura Dern and Nicolas Cage indulge their *amour fou*. (MFB No. 680)

A World Without Pity (Un Monde sans pitié)

Artificial Eye ART 017

France 1989 Price £14.99

Certificate 15 Director Eric Rochant
★ Young love blossoms in Paris between an attractive drifter

(Hippolyte Girardot) and a bright student (Mireille Perrier). Stylish and well-observed. Subtitles (MFB No. 683)

Retail premiere

The Best of Out & Out On Tuesday

Connoisseur CRO 51

UK 1989-1991 Price £14.99

Certificate 15 Directors Susan Ardill, Richard Kwietniowski, Peter Wells, Pratibha Parmar Producers Rebecca Dobbs, Susan Ardill, Clare Beavan, Cheryl Farthing, Stewart Main
82 minutes

★ A compilation of highlights from Channel 4's innovative gay TV series, *Out and Out On Tuesday*.

The Brain Eaters

Castle-Hendring HEN 2337

USA 1958 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Bruno Vesota
Producer Edwin Nelson Screenplay Gordon Urquhart Lead Actors Ed Nelson, Leonard Nimoy, Jody Fair, Joanna Lee 61 minutes

★ Parasites from outer space dine on what little grey matter exists in a small-town community. B/W

A Cry for Help

Odyssey ODY 713

USA 1989 Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director Robert Markovitz Producer Lee Miller
Screenplay Beth Sullivan Photography Eric Van Heren-Noman Lead Actors Nancy McKeon, Dale Midkiff, Graham Jarvis, Yvette Heyden, Bruce Weitz 91 minutes
Self-righteous, social-issue drama about a woman who sues the police for failing to intervene in a domestic dispute with her violent ex-husband.

Gay Classics:

Connoisseur CRO 52

Price £14.99

Un Chant d'amour

France 1950 (MFB No. 478)

Director Jean Genet

Looking for Langston

UK 1988 (MFB No. 673)

Director Isaac Julien

Flames of Passion

UK 1989 Director Richard

Kwietniowski

Certificate 18 90 minutes

★ Three shorts put out on one video as part of the excellent new *Connoisseur* gay series. Genet's controversial, homoerotic silent film *Un Chant d'amour* was banned for many years, *Looking for Langston* is Julien's (*Young Soul Rebels*) homage to the black gay poet Langston Hughes, and *Flames of Passion* is a wonderful reworking of *Brief Encounter* in eighteen minutes. B/W

I Was a Teenage Werewolf

Castle-Hendring HEN 2340

USA 1957 Price £10.99

Certificate 15 Director Gene Fowler Jr
Producer Herman Cohen Screenplay Ralph Thornton Lead Actors Michael Landon, Yvonne Lime, Guy Williams, Valdimir Sokoloff 76 minutes
This veteran of the drive-in circuit stars a young Michael Landon who transforms into a werewolf and terrorises schoolgirls after dark. B/W

It Conquered the World

Castle-Hendring HEN 2347

USA 1956 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director/Producer Roger Corman Screenplay Lou Rusoff, Charles Griffith Lead Actors Lee Van Cleef, Beverly Garland, Peter Graves 70 minutes
Corman's second feature has an alien from Venus plotting to infest the earth with bats. Remade in 1966 as *Zontar, The Thing from Venus*. B/W

National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation

Warner PES 11889

USA 1989 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director Jeremiah S. Chechick Producer/Screenplay John Hughes Photography Thomas Ackerman Lead Actors Chevy Chase, Beverly D'Angelo, Randy Quaid 93 minutes



Gay classic: 'Looking for Langston'

Yule-tide hi-jinks with Chevy Chase and a script that probably took John Hughes ten minutes.

The Spider

(aka *Earth Vs the Spider*)

Castle-Hendring HEN 2336

USA 1958 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director/Producer Bert I. Gordon Screenplay Laszlo Gorog, George Worthing Yates Lead Actors Edward Kemmer, June Kenny, Gene Persson 73 minutes
★ More fun than *Arachnophobia* – a rock'n'roll-hating, eight-legged monster terrorises the local high school prom. B/W

Strip Jack Naked: Nighthawks II

Connoisseur CRO 50

UK 1991 Price £14.99

Certificate 18 Director/Producer Ron Peck Screenplay Ron Peck, Paul Hallam 91 minutes
★ Using out-takes from his 1975 film *Nighthawks* merged with new footage, Peck creates something that is part autobiography, part diary of the making of a film. His reflections on being gay in Britain are visually poetic without becoming self-indulgent.

Voyage of Terror

(aka *The Achille Lauro Affair*)

Odyssey ODY 709

USA 1990 Price £19.99 (2 tapes)

Certificate 15 Director Alberto Negrin Producer David Lawrence Screenplay Sergio Donati, Alberto Negrin Lead Actors Burt Lancaster, Eva-Marie Saint, Robert Culp 178 minutes
Real-life drama with Lancaster and Saint on board an ocean liner defying a gang of PLO hi-jackers.

War of the Colossal Beast

Castle-Hendring HEN 2349

USA 1958 Price £10.99

Certificate PG Director/Producer Bert I. Gordon Screenplay George Worthing Yates Lead Actors Dean Parkins, Sally Fraser 69 minutes
Sequel to the equally inept yet magnificent, *The Amazing Colossal Man*. B/W

Wherever You Are

Braveworld Premier STV 2069

UK/Poland/Germany 1988

Price £10.99

Certificate 18 Director Krzysztof Zanussi Producers Gerhard Schmidt, Mark Forstater Screenplay Krzysztof Zanussi Lead Actors Julian Sands, Renée Soutendijk 100 minutes
Poland 1938. A young bride (Soutendijk) has stark visions of the future. Her slide towards insanity signals of the apocalypse to come.

Letters are welcome, and should be addressed to the Editor at Sight and Sound, British Film Institute, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL. Facsimile 071 436 2327

Horror

From David Prothero

Adversarial journalism may have its place, but not when rehearsed by a slick simpleton like Stan Nicholls ('Shlock Horror', S&S November 1991). At sea with exploitation, his rosey review of Stefan Jaworzyn's *Shock Xpress 1* declares from the first that he is the wrong man for what it seems someone has deemed an unenviable job, opening with a lame OED definition of the word 'exploit' more suiting a school report than a considered recognition of the strangely marginal world of visceral cinema. It is not Nicholls' distaste that annoys, but his disinterest: the succeeding trudge seems powered by a quick glimpse at the pictures ('Colin Davis' 'Freaks In The Cinema' proves less offensive than the accompanying illustrations might suggest, but left me uneasy nonetheless) – the reviewer failing even to read the volume's cover wrap properly, incorrectly cataloguing its contents as reprints from the original SX magazine. ('All new material', the blurb says in bold.)

Nicholls' textual readings court a like-wise irrelevancy, devoting most time to mainstream makers with comfortably high-profile i.d.s (Corman, Dante, jobbing cashman Harry Towers) – whose relationship to sleaze is tangential if formative, whose position in the book only makes sense as the surprisingly public face of a far more interesting illicit movie world. Which (a spark of skill here!) the author manages almost totally to evade. And as for citing Michele Soavi as "the epitome of exploitation sleaze", summoning sexist red herrings to add credence to his entirely unprovocative position – well, I despair. It edifies no one to know he knows nothing of Italy's brightest hope, nor is there interest in being told what predictable genre distractions he feels safe with (Stephanie Rothman, Penelope Spheeris and Amy Jones – why not add Kathryn Bigelow, forget Barbara Peeters and ponder the sex of Dominique Othenin-Gerard?). Shoddily dismissive, Stan Nicholls appears to address another book entirely, with far more revealed about personal lacunae than a review brief – and solicited work at that – should merit.

'Shlock Horror' is dress-up *Sunday Mirror* stuff that a progressive *Sight and Sound* need no longer bother with, never mind pay for. For the record, SX1 is an intelligent, near-vital volume righteously produced for fellow specialists by experts past first base with a challenging form of international film – that it may do many, inclusive of Mr Nicholls, good to read.

Cardiff

Pam Cook, Book Reviews editor replies:

For the record, I have read *Shock Xpress 1* – though I have to admit it tested my boredom threshold to the limit. With the exception of the piece by George Kuchar and the interview with Guy Maddin, the



To compare or not to compare: why abuse Branagh to celebrate Jarman?

articles are tedious rehearsals of lists of film titles and plot synopses which show no evidence of any willingness on the part of the authors to engage with exploitation cinema on the level of ideas. The interview questions put to undoubtedly interesting film-makers are depressingly banal. If Michele Soavi is "Italy's brightest hope", Alan Jones' interview fails to tell us why. In both text and illustrations, the book displays a dismayingly naive ignorance of sexual politics.

Also for the record, although Stan Nicholls was mistaken in assuming that the book was a collection of reprints, the publishers' blurb is also inaccurate. As the credits inside the back cover indicate, SX1 is a combination of old material partially rewritten and new material. Don't believe everything you read on the cover wrap.

David Prothero's remarks about "sexist red herrings" and reference to the work of women exploitation film-makers as "distractions" simply confirm that he shares the misogynist bias of the approach taken by SX1. This unproblematic acceptance of regressive male fantasies is challenged by the work of the women directors mentioned in Stan Nicholls' review, which no doubt accounts for their exclusion from the book.

Jarman vs Branagh

From Kenneth S. Rothwell

Why is it necessary for Colin McCabe to demonise Kenneth Branagh in order to beatify Derek Jarman (S&S October 1991)? As an admirer of Branagh's *Henry V* for one set of reasons, and Jarman's *Tempest* for still another, I find this tactic obnoxious. Sure, Branagh reinvented *Henry V* to reflect the England of Margaret Thatcher, just as Olivier remodelled it for wartime 1944. Are Branagh's flashbacks to the tavern in 1H4 any more egregious, or "vulgar", than Olivier's representation of Falstaff's reported deathbed trauma? Isn't a film director allowed a certain license in visualising verbal images?

Certainly Jarman's *Tempest* must be credited with having been in the vanguard of Shakespeare movies when he filtered that play through the alembic of a punk/gay culture a decade ago. Jarman, who re-inscribed Prospero as an imperial-

ist oppressor of Caliban, bought into a trope that today has become a virtual cliché of lit/crit/speak. Raul Julia's Caliban in Paul Mazursky's 1982 modernisation of *The Tempest* continues in that tradition.

Jarman's agony of spirit gives his audiences a unique vision that requires for its defence no mean-spirited comparisons with the work of other film-makers. I hope that *Edward II* receives a more generous welcome on this side of the Atlantic than his misunderstood *Tempest*.

University of Vermont

No dreamgirl

From Andrew Davies

I was happily luxuriating in the visual and tactile pleasures of your magazine when I came across your wee man's crass review of *Filipina Dreamgirls* (S&S December 1991).

It's a bit galling to be accused of cliché by someone who can write "coming from the pen of", "'New Man' novel" and "self-lacerating male consciousness-raising" all in the same sentence. (Coming from the what of?)

If you think in clichés, that's what you're going to see. "Caring sensitive Carwyn" is how he sees himself, but his caring sensitivity is mainly for his own self-esteem, his sexual anxiety, and his desire not to be ripped off financially. The ambiguous final shot of Carwyn and Marietta indicates that the union is not nearly so secure as he supposes.

Your reviewer Adam Barker also takes the lumbering Gareth at face value – in fact, he has a more subtle function, being at once the most primitive of the tourists and the quickest to adapt, his position as a Welsh speaker being related to the Tagalog spoken by the women... cradling, lullabies, water, violence... oh, come on, wake up, stupid!

"Les Blair's semi-improvised approach to ensemble playing". What's that supposed to mean? Les sometimes "devises and directs" films using improvised dialogue, for example in *Newshounds*. His method is quite different from that of Mike Leigh, and might be of interest to *Sight and Sound*. *Filipina Dreamgirls* has an original screenplay by me, and there is not a word in the finished film that I didn't write before the unit went out to Manila. This is Les Blair's other way of working (cf *The Accountant*). It was the first time I'd worked with Les and I was interested that he didn't want to use any improvisation at all, and stuck more faithfully to the word than directors usually do.

What was even more disappointing, in a journal dedicated to cinema, was that there was no indication that this was a film – I might as well have written a newspaper article, and Les might as well have stayed at home, considering the amount of notice Adam Barker took of the visual and aural aspects of the film.

It would be lovely to read some visually aware and informed criticism that I could learn from, and if I can't get it in *Sight and Sound*, where the fuck can I get it? Yes, of course, I know, from friends in the business. Still, though...

Warwickshire

Hard and soft times

Benjamin Woolley

The last time the word 'synergy' was used so prominently about one company buying into another, British Aerospace was trying to convince the world that multi-role fighter aircraft and communications satellites had something to do with building Metros. This time, it is Time Warner, claiming a synergistic relationship with its new partners, Toshiba and C-Itch.

Though C-Itch is known in this country for selling computer printers, it is in fact the world's largest trading company, with sales put at an awesome \$151 billion a year. Toshiba is better known for its TV sets and laptop computers. Neither is known for making movies or television. Nevertheless, for \$500 million each they have together bought a 12.5 per cent stake in Time Warner Entertainment (a new division comprising the Warner film studios and Time Warner's cable TV interests) as well as a proportionate amount of the parent company's vast debts.

Steven J. Ross, Time Warner's chief executive, claims that his company is not just another item in the "\$35 billion fire sale" of US film studios and media companies to foreign interests that began in 1985 with the sale of 20th Century Fox to Murdoch's News Corp. This is different, not just in degree (12.5 per cent is hardly a controlling interest) but in intention. It is not about takeover; it is, they keep saying, about synergy.

So wherein lies the synergy? Time Warner is now the biggest media company in the world, a combined harvester of profits from newspaper and magazine publishing, a cable TV network with over

six million subscribers, the Home Box Office cable channel, the world's largest music company (which, at the time of going to press, was reportedly negotiating a billion-dollar deal with Madonna), and the old Warner Brothers studios.

Ross is a man who knows about adapting skills and ideas from one business to another. He started out as an undertaker and car park operator. "I learned about people from the funeral business", he said in an interview, not apparently intending to sound sinister.

With Time Warner, he has created the modern archetype of cross-media ownership - more so even than Murdoch has managed to do with News Corp, which has yet to make an impact in the music business. Given a property, Time Warner has the means of exploiting every aspect of it: "Madonna... will not only make records for Warner Records, but star in Warner movies, air her videos on its cable TV services, feature on the cover of *People* magazine, and be merchandised through Time Warner's direct-marketing division", predicted the *Independent on Sunday*.

Through Toshiba and C-Itch, Ross is hoping to take this integration a stage further, into the era of 'multimedia'. Time Warner's empire, he thinks, will one day come together in an epiphany of media synthesis. The combined Toshiba TV set and laptop computer will download, via the cable TV network, a suite of Time Warner software: personalised newspaper information to print out on the computer's printer; films selected from a distant database of entertainment products; TV shows with which the viewer interacts, selecting different endings to soaps or



'I learned about people from the funeral business', said chief executive Ross in an interview, not apparently intending to sound sinister

acting as game show contestant. Time Warner has already announced plans to start experimental cable services in New York that could lay the foundations of this multimedia future.

Toshiba and C-Itch will help make it happen. "We are confident Time Warner Entertainment will lead to significant new business opportunities in the rapidly expanding market of digital, interactive information technology", Joichi Aoi, Toshiba's chief executive, told the *Los Angeles Times*. "When we consider the future development of the business, software will become as important as the hardware. It will be a dynamic relationship, with developments in hardware driving a new revolution in software". Sounds great, worth \$500 million of anyone's money.

Multimedia is already accepted as the next big thing in the computing industry. Computers are being developed that can handle video and music as effortlessly as they can handle text and numbers. For the time being, they are beyond the budgets of personal computer users and, in any case, nobody has much idea of what to do with them. But that is largely because of lack of software - and Time Warner Entertainment may be able to change that.

You could be cynical and say Ross is really after C-Itch's distribution channel, and the company's ability to help Time Warner protect and exploit its intellectual property rights in Asia. You could sceptically observe that Toshiba probably felt lonely being among a shrinking minority of Japanese electronics giants without a stake in Hollywood. Or you could say that maybe this time it's more than a tactical financial deal - that it really is synergy.

Professor Potemkin's competition

No doubt as a consequence of studying the profound and perceptive essays for which certain other sections of this magazine are rightly famous, our readers are setting new standards in visual literacy and art appreciation. Our most prolific entrant, Pete Tate of Leicester, enclosed reproductions of two fine paintings from the 'Gustav Klimt Book of 30 Postcards'. No doubt the remainder will follow in the next couple of months.

Levels of repartee, however, remain at low water. Many readers correctly identified the actors in our latest puzzle picture. The standing figures were Adrienne Servanti and Jean-Pierre Zola and the man having a nap was none other than Jacques Tati, taking time out from his onerous performance responsibilities on 'Mon Oncle', the classic French comedy he wrote and directed in 1958. However, the dialogue submitted was seldom above the comic



invention of a late 'Carry On' movie. Though it has to be admitted that only a genius could match the original

soundtrack dialogue of the scene, with its scattershot puns - *zouave, zéro, zig, zinzin, zonard, zozo* - zapped out against

the z-z-z-z-z snoring of Tati.

Congratulations, in any case, to Don Woolford of Shrewsbury, whose catty caption, 'Don't wake him, dear, he's just been watching *Citizen Kane* for the fiftieth time', wins a copy of Kurosawa's epic 'Throne of Blood'.

To restock your own tired video collection (this month's champion will earn a copy of 'The Angelic Conversation'), all you need do is put pen to postcard and supply enlightening information on the dimly lit item from the National Film Archive inserted here. What is the film? Who were the actors? And what brief, brilliant morsel of dialogue can you invent to delight your fellow readers?

Answers please (by card or fax) before 15 January to Professor Potemkin, Sight and Sound, BFI, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL (or fax: 071 437 2327). And a very Happy New Year.

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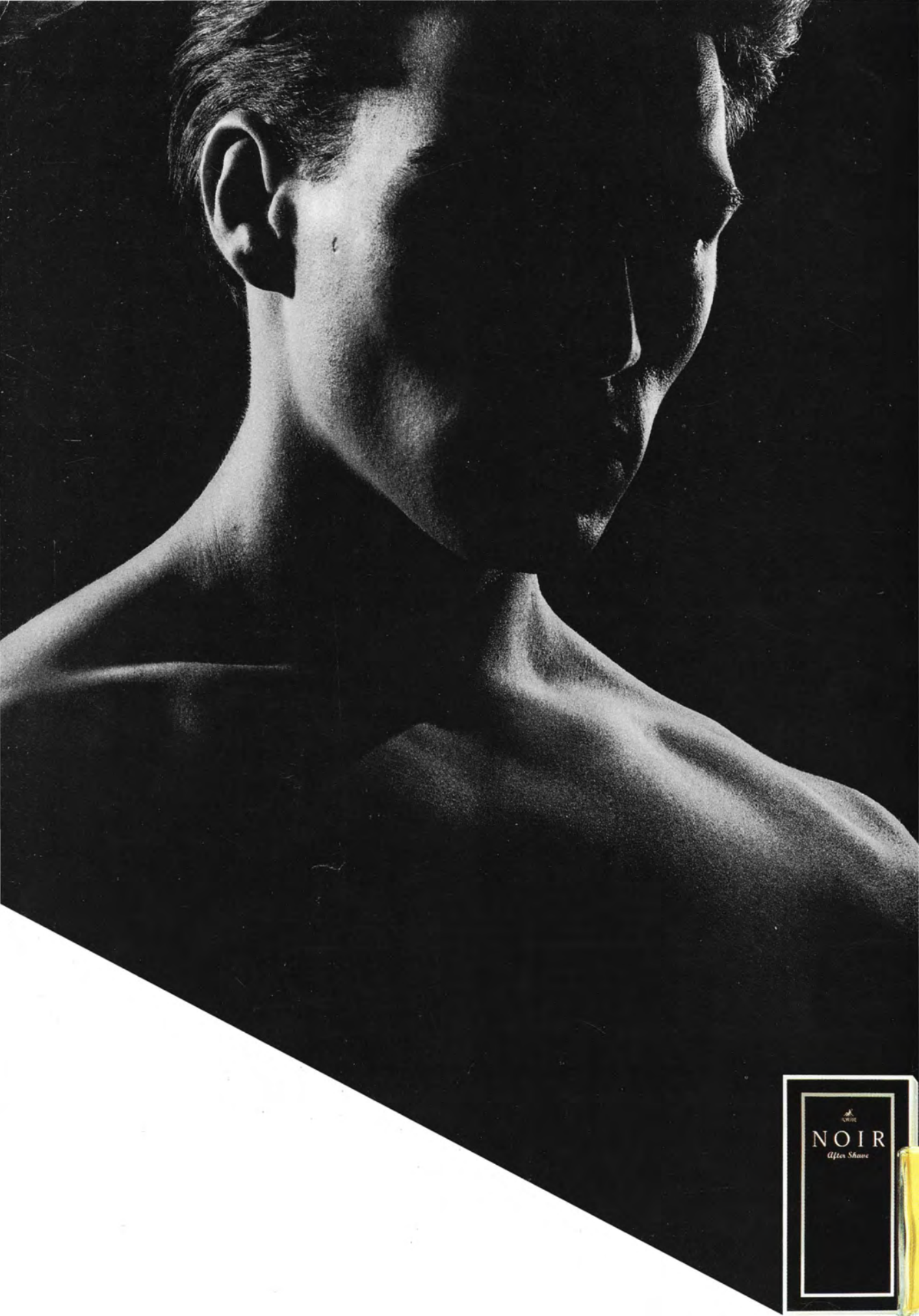
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